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FRANCISCUS M. WYNDHAM,
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THE CATECHISM IN EXAMPLES

By the REV. D. CHISHOLM
Priest of the Diocese of Aberdeen

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THE CATECHISM IN EXAMPLES

XLIX

THE THEOLOGICAL AND CARDINAL VIRTUES, AND THE THREE EMINENT GOOD WORKS

I. The Theological Virtues.

My child, the Theological Virtues are Faith, Hope, and Charity; they are called theological because they relate immediately to God. You have already read about these virtues in the three first volumes of this book; you have there learned what they mean, and how they are to be practised, so it will be sufficient in this place to recall them briefly to your mind.

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

Faith is a supernatural gift of God, which enables us to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed, for He is truth itself, and can neither deceive nor be deceived. We know what God has revealed to us, by the testimony, teaching, and authority of the Catholic Church, to which He gave Divine authority to teach when He said to His Apostles: "Go ye and teach all nations."

Hope is a supernatural gift of God by which we firmly trust that God will give us eternal life and all the means necessary to obtain it, if we do what He requires of us ; and our hope in God is founded on His infinite goodness, His infinite power, and His fidelity to His promises.

Charity is a supernatural gift of God, by which we love God above all things and our neighbours as ourselves for God's sake. We love Him above all things because He is infinitely good in Himself and infinitely good to us ; and we show God that we love Him by keeping His commandments. We love our neighbours as ourselves when we wish them the same good spiritually and temporally as we wish ourselves for God's sake, and by praying for them, and by never allowing ourselves any thought, word, or deed, to the injury of anyone.

II. The Cardinal Virtues : Prudence.

There are four virtues which are called Cardinal Virtues. They are called cardinal because they are, as it were, the hinges on which all other moral virtues turn.

The four Cardinal Virtues are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance.

The first Cardinal Virtue is Prudence.

Christian prudence requires of us in the first place that we should make our eternal salvation secure by knowing, loving, and serving God, and also if necessary by sacrificing all the goods we possess in this world, and even our very lives, in order to secure for ourselves hereafter the joys of Paradise.

"AND THEN? AND THEN?"

There once lived in Rome a young man whose name was Francis, who was a great favourite of St. Philip Neri.

From the time when he was quite a little boy the Saint loved him with a special tenderness because he was so gentle and so pious. He was clever too, and learned his lessons with great care, so that everyone said he would become a great man some day, and make a name for himself in the world.

When he left school he entered a lawyer's office, where, in a short time, he became so famous that people even among the nobility and at Court began to speak about him.

Unfortunately this praise which people gave him began to have a bad influence upon him. He who used formerly to be so fervent and so pious, and who went so frequently to the Sacraments, now became so much taken up with his studies that he shortened his usual prayers and went to the Sacraments more rarely and with less fervour.

St. Philip observed this falling off, and was much grieved at it. One day he sent for him to come to his house to speak to him. Francis went at once, for he loved his dear spiritual Father with a great affection; and although he had at this time some forebodings in his mind that he was about to receive a reprimand for his negligence, yet he went.

When he reached the room of the Saint, he sat down in his usual place at St. Philip's knee, and looked up into his face, as if to ask him what he wanted to say to him.

The Saint put his arm around him, and lavished upon him the most endearing caresses.

" My own dear boy," he said, with a sweet smile on his countenance, " my own dear boy ! So you are busy at your studies, and you intend, I hear, to gain for yourself a great name in the world. O happy you ! And then you will, no doubt, be made a Doctor of Law, and begin to gain money. And then, my child, what then ?"

" Then, Father," continued the youth, " I may become an advocate, and then some day, perhaps, I may be a prelate."

" And then ?" said St. Philip.

" And then," said Francis, " I may become a Cardinal." And he went on with great enthusiasm to enumerate all the honours he might one day obtain. After each one that he mentioned, the Saint always said, " And then ?"

When he had finished describing all the honours he could think of, St. Philip said again to him, " And then, my child, what then ?"

" Father," said the youth, " that is the highest dignity to which I can aspire."

St. Philip then, pressing the young man's head to his bosom, whispered once more in his ear : " And then, my child, what then ?"

These words, so tenderly said, made such an impression on the mind of Francis that on the way to his own house, and when he reached it, he kept continually saying to himself : " And then ? I am studying to get on in the world, and *then ?* what *then ?*" They seemed to sound in his ears whatever he did, or wherever he went.

At last he said : " Yes, O my God, *then* I shall have to die ; *then* I shall have to be judged. What will it avail me *then* to have got on in the world, and to have become great here below ? When I die, all will be over ; my fame will be at an end, and the praise of the world will be of no use to me ; and perhaps because I am trying to gain these perishable things I may lose my soul. O my God, I will no longer think of these things, but from this time forward I will serve Thee alone ; from this moment I will trample under my feet all human praise, and seek only to gain merit which will last for ever. And then ? Ah, yes, and *then* I shall be happy."

He returned in haste to St. Philip, and threw himself at his feet, and besought him to receive him at once among his religious, where he would be able to serve God faithfully. *Life of St. Philip Neri.*

One of the most important things we have to do while in this world is to discover in what path of life God desires us to walk, so that we may serve Him as we ought ; our happiness in this world and in the next depends on this. The virtue of prudence causes us to have recourse to God, that He may be pleased to make this known to us.

ROBERT, THE STUDENT OF LYONS.

There was in the days of Alberic, Abbot of Citeaux, a young student at Lyons named Robert. The one desire of his soul was to serve God with his whole heart, and he prayed with the greatest fervour to God to make known to him in some way or

other the state of life in which He desired him to live while in the world.

God heard his prayer, and showed him in a vision what He wanted him to do. He thought he was standing in a valley, and that he saw before him a very high mountain, on the top of which there was a large and beautiful city. He felt a great desire to enter that city, and he set out with the intention of going up to it. But when he came to the foot of the mountain, there was a great and very deep river, over which he had to pass before he could reach the mountain. He went up and down the banks of the river, looking for a place by which he might cross over it ; but as the river was very deep, he could not find any. While he was wondering in his mind how he could get to the other side, he saw on the bank opposite to him twelve or fourteen poor men who were washing their clothes. One of them had on a tunic of snowy whiteness, and he was helping the rest of his companions each in his turn.

The student asked them : " Who are you ?"

The one in the pure white garment answered : " These poor men whom you see are monks who are washing away their sins in the waters of penance ; I am their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. The city which you see up there is Heaven, where I reign with those who have done penance. This path you also must follow if you desire to enter Paradise."

The student told this vision to the Bishop of Châlons.

" My child," replied the Bishop, " you must become a religious in the monastery of Citeaux."

He went there at once. When he came to the

gate, he knocked. To his astonishment the monk that came to open it was one of the poor men he saw in the vision. As he went into the monastery he recognized each of the monks as he met him. He then told the Superior the vision he had had, and how he had seen all the monks in his vision. This filled them all with great joy, and they thanked God, Who had granted him this vision for their encouragement. *Pet. Bolland.*, i. 631.

ST. ALOYSIUS RENOUNCES THE WORLD TO SECURE HIS SALVATION.

St. Aloysius, full of the Christian virtue of prudence, had one thing continually before his mind, and this was how he might save his soul and obtain the eternal reward of Heaven.

In order that he might effect this more easily he resolved to renounce his title to the Marquisate of Castiglione, and all his worldly prospects, and to consecrate himself entirely to God in the religious life.

As soon as he had obtained the consent of his father, he prepared to leave his paternal home for ever. When his vassals heard of it, they all shed tears of unfeigned sorrow. "O Lord Louis," they all cried out in the midst of their sobs and wailing, "why are you going to leave us? You are the heir to magnificent estates, and your vassals are most attached to you. Besides the natural love they have for you as their Prince, they love you for your own sake. We had placed all our future hopes in you, and now, when you have come to the age to rule over us, you go away and forsake us."

The only answer that Louis made them was this : " My friends, in leaving you I am seeking only the salvation of my soul, by labouring to attain the glory which can never be taken from me. You know how difficult it is for one who possesses the goods of this world to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. My only desire is to be there for ever with God. Let every one of you think of this, and have this desire also."

AGNES, THE FOOLISH CHILD.

A little girl whose name was Agnes had just reached her fifth birthday. Her father made her the present of a new dress, and her mother invited their friends to come and dine with them, in honour of the happy day.

Agnes's godfather was there also, and when the child ran to meet him, he put into her hand a sovereign in gold as his gift. Agnes, as may well be imagined, was full of joy when she saw the beautiful piece of money, and knew that it was all her own. She showed it to everyone who came into the house.

When her parents were at dinner, and when she had had her share of the good things upon the table, she left the room to amuse herself at the door of the cottage. Just at that moment a countrywoman was passing by, carrying a basket filled with fruit.

Agnes ran towards her, and cried out to her : " Look here ! look at the beautiful piece of money I have."

The woman took the coin into her hand, and seeing that it was gold, said to the child : " Yes, it is indeed very beautiful ; but see, here is an apple which is

larger and still more beautiful. I will give you this large red-cheeked apple if you give me your little piece of gold."

The child looked at the apple ; it was indeed very pretty. " Yes," she said, " I will give you the money in exchange for the apple."

When the woman received the money, she went away at once, and was seen no more. Agnes, after admiring the apple for a few moments, thought she would run and show it to her mother.

" Look, mother !" she said, " look at this beautiful apple !"

" Where did you get that apple, my child ?"

" Oh, a good woman that was passing by gave it to me for my little gold farthing ; is it not beautiful ?"

When her mother heard this, she became very angry, and her father gave her a severe scolding. But her godfather said to them : " Do not find fault with the child for what she has done ; she did not know the value of the piece of money, and it was quite natural for her to give it away for that beautiful apple, which she thought was much more valuable. There are many people more foolish than that child is, who at the same time think themselves very wise. For there are many who sell the endless joys of Heaven for the miserable things of this world ; and there are others who, for the pleasure of a moment, lose their souls in eternity. This child has given us a lesson which we should never forget."

CANON SCHMIDT.

III. The Cardinal Virtues: Justice.

Justice, my child, is the second Cardinal Virtue. It consists in giving to everyone that which is due. It concerns not only the duties we owe one to the other, but also those which we ourselves must discharge towards God.

Jesus Christ has said: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

"THIS DO, AND THOU SHALT LIVE."

The Ten Commandments prescribe to us our duties towards God and our neighbour; in carefully observing them we will practise in an eminent degree this cardinal virtue of justice, or, in our Lord's own words, we will "fulfil all justice."

The first three Commandments have for their object our duties towards God. "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve." Justice towards God requires of us to honour God with a supreme and sovereign honour which can be given to no other, to worship Him as our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Last End, and to obey Him with all diligence as our true and supreme Lord.

In consequence of this He requires of us that we show outwardly a great reverence for His holy Name, and observe with great diligence the external signs of worship He has appointed, and especially by consecrating to His service the days He has appointed for this purpose, not only that we may manifest our submission to Him as our Lord and

Master, but also that we may nourish in our hearts a greater love for Him.

The other seven Commandments explain to us in detail how we are to exercise this virtue of justice with regard to our neighbour, whom we must love as we love ourselves. Justice requires us in the first place to love, honour, and obey our parents and those who rule over us in God's Name; secondly, to entertain towards our neighbour with regard to his person, his reputation, and his possessions, the same sentiments which we would desire him to entertain towards ourselves, and not even in our thoughts to bear towards him any feelings which might be to his prejudice.

From this, my child, you can easily see what this virtue of justice means, and how justly it finds a place among the four fundamental virtues of our holy Religion. You have already read in detail these various duties in the instructions upon the Commandments, and you will often think of what you have read there that you may more readily practise this virtue of justice.

IV. The Cardinal Virtues: Fortitude.

The third Cardinal Virtue is Fortitude. It consists in supporting courageously the labours of this life, and in being willing to endure even death itself rather than neglect to accomplish our duties to God.

THE FORTY MARTYRS OF SEBASTE.

At Sebaste, a town of Armenia, there was a company of Christian soldiers, forty in number.

When the Governor found out that they were Christians, he was very angry, and having brought them all before him, he told them that if they did not give up their Faith and worship idols, they would all be put to death.

But these brave soldiers answered with one voice : " We will never do what you command us ; we will neither worship idols nor forsake the true Faith which God has given us."

The Governor, who knew that these soldiers were amongst the bravest in the army, was very anxious to spare them ; so he promised them honours and promotion if they would only consent to worship the gods which the Emperor worshipped.

But his promises had no more effect upon them than his threats, and they told him again that they would die rather than renounce their Faith. This answer made him still more angry, and, sending for his secretary, he ordered him to write out the sentence of death against them.

Now, it was the winter-time, and the rivers and ponds were all covered with ice. The cruel Governor, hoping still to make them yield to his orders, commanded them to be stripped of their clothes, and to be placed upon the ice till they should be frozen to death. At the same time he gave orders that a large tank of warm water should be placed at the side of the pond, so that if any of them should wish to renounce Jesus Christ and save his life, he might be taken off the pond, and put into the warm water.

When these good soldiers were put upon the ice, they encouraged each other not to be afraid to die, but to persevere till the end. They had not been

afraid to face death on the field of battle for a little worldly honour, and surely they would not be worthy of the name of soldiers if they feared death when it was to bring them eternal joys.

"Let us take courage, brethren," they said to one another; "one night of suffering, and then an eternity of happiness in Heaven."

At the same time, raising up their hands towards Heaven, they prayed thus to God: "There are forty of us, O God, who have entered on this pond; grant that every one of us may persevere, and that the number forty may remain complete in Heaven as it is now on earth."

What a terrible night of suffering it was for them! For many hours they all remained faithful, and bore their slow, lingering death with heroic constancy.

It happened that the soldier who had been placed as a sentinel near the pond to see that none of them escaped, and who was a pagan, had a wonderful vision. As he stood watching the martyrs and admiring their courage, a bright light shone over his head, and, looking up, he saw thirty-nine angels coming down from Heaven, and each of the thirty-nine angels had a crown in his hand.

While he was wondering in his mind what could be the meaning of this, for he knew that there were forty men on the pond, and he saw only thirty-nine crowns in the hands of the angels, he heard one of the soldiers utter a cry. "Take me off! take me off!" he said, "for I cannot endure this cold any longer."

Very soon he was carried off the pond, and put into the bath of warm water which was near at hand. But the poor unfortunate man soon reaped the

punishment of his sin. No sooner had he been put into the bath than he died; so he lost not only his temporal life, but he also lost his poor soul. If he had persevered only a few minutes longer, he would have died a martyr, and gone at once to God.

When the thirty-nine others saw what had happened, they were greatly afflicted, for they had prayed so earnestly to God that forty should that day be crowned. But God very soon gave them consolation, for when the guard saw what had happened, touched by God's grace, he ran to the Governor, and said: "Put me on the pond, for I also am now a Christian, and I want to die with them." The Governor, in a rage, commanded him to be stripped of his clothes, and to be placed on the ice along with the others. This was done, and he died a martyr's death, instead of the other who had not persevered to the end.

Now it came to pass that next morning, when daylight had come, the Governor went down to see the soldiers. He found them all dead but one—the youngest one, whose name was Meliton, and he ordered the thirty-nine bodies to be put on a cart, and conveyed to a certain place to be burned; but he told them to take the young man who was still alive to his own house, that he might try to make him renounce Jesus Christ, and so save his life.

But the mother of the boy, who was standing near and heard these words, was filled with grief. She was afraid that if he did not die, he might not persevere to the end, so with her own hands she lifted him off the ice, and, carrying him in her arms, ran after the cart on which the bodies of his companions were, and laid him beside them. This heroic mother had

the happiness of seeing him die there. "Now," she said, "my son is safe; he has fought the good fight, and is now in Heaven."

We all say we love God, but we must not be content with words only; we must show it also in our actions. We are Christians, and to gain Heaven we must do violence to ourselves—that is, we must go against our own inclinations, and fight against our own passions, for this is the only condition on which God has promised us eternal life.

Lives of the Saints, March 10.

ST. BLANDINA'S COURAGE.

In the year 177 many Christians were arrested at Lyons, and condemned to death on account of their religion. Among these was a young Christian slave whose name was Blandina. She was a poor weakly girl, and the faithful were afraid that she might not be able to persevere to the end, and that her courage might fail under the threats of a cruel death. Her mistress in a more special manner feared for her, and anxiously waited to see the end.

Her tormentors caused her to endure unheard-of sufferings that they might make her deny her Faith; but their most cruel efforts were all in vain. The only words they heard her utter were these: "I am a Christian; one who is a Christian does not commit sin." Her happy death obtained for her the crown of martyrdom.

Blandina was a Christian "in deed and in truth." Would to God that we would always remember these words: "I am a Christian; one who is a Christian does not commit sin."

THE SISTER OF CHARITY.

In one of the wars in modern times, which devastated the most beautiful countries of Europe, a soldier, who was intoxicated and covered with blood, met on his way a Sister of Charity, who had come forth from her convent to comfort and bring aid to the dying. As she approached him he stood still, and placed the point of his bayonet towards her breast. Without showing any sign of fear, she gently turned it aside, saying : " My friend, do you think that I am afraid of a bayonet ? No ; I fear no one but God."

Then continuing on her way without even turning her head, she went to the assistance of a wounded soldier who had been pierced by a bullet, and lay at the point of death a few steps farther on.

Those who love and serve God fear no temporal evil, my child ; the only thing they fear is to offend God by committing sin.

THE SCOURGE OF GOD.

Everyone trembled in the presence of the King of the Huns, Attila, surnamed the " Scourge of God." He had already overrun all Europe, burned and pillaged more than five hundred towns, and used to boast that grass would never again grow on the highways over which his horse had passed.

When he had spread sorrow and desolation in every country of the North, he descended upon the fair lands of Italy, and pushed his armies onwards towards Rome.

The Emperor and the people were filled with

dismay when they heard of his approach. The Pope who governed the Church at that time was Leo the Great—great, indeed, by his piety, his eloquence, and his indomitable courage.

Valentinian the Emperor immediately besought him to come to his palace to consult with him in the emergency. "My Father," he said to him on his arrival, "everyone is flying from me, and I am left alone. How can I, single-handed, oppose this Attila, this barbarian, who in his pride calls himself the 'Scourge of God'? It is true, indeed, that God in His anger has raised him up for a time for the punishment of His people, and therefore it is you alone who can stem the torrent. Go forth, therefore, and meet him on the way, and endeavour by every means to calm his savage spirit. My Father, have you not often told us that in public calamities such as this the Good Shepherd is the best one to assure the safety of His flock?"

Leo answered: "O Prince, I hope soon to prove to you the truth of what I said. I will without delay go forth to meet this ferocious barbarian. I do not fear for my life, for God is the Master of life and death; Attila will not be able to injure me."

Immediately after this interview Leo departed from Rome on his errand of mercy and peace. When he reached the camp of the enemy, and was brought into the presence of Attila, he spoke to him with so much majesty, sweetness, and eloquence that the King of the Huns began to tremble before him.

"Whosoever you are," said he to the holy Pontiff, "be you man or angel, Rome and Italy owe you their salvation. Old man, you have accomplished

in one instant, and by a few words, what Valentinian and all the Senate of Rome could never have achieved with all their powerful armies. Give thanks, therefore, to the God Whom you serve ; Attila acknowledges himself conquered by you and by Him."

It was, indeed, a great glory for that great Pope to have had the fortitude, the courage to meet and conquer so powerful an enemy, but by the grace of the same God, my child, in whom he trusted, you will be able to resist and overcome a still more powerful enemy, whose only aim is the destruction of your soul. *History of the Church.*

WORDS OF CONSOLATION.

Blessed Henry Suso wrote the following words of consolation to a certain religious who was tried by many great afflictions :

" It is, indeed, easy to speak of the sufferings, trials, and afflictions of others, but when they come to ourselves it is very difficult to bear them patiently. Sometimes the servants of God find so much pain in their crosses that they are tempted to think that God has forgotten them altogether.

" Like Our Divine Lord on the Cross, they cry out, ' My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? Hast Thou forgotten that I am in the world ? Why art Thou so angry with me that Thy hand is falling so heavily upon me—Thou Who art so merciful and so good ?'

" To these loving complaints Our Lord answers : ' My child, look up to Heaven, and see the multitude of Saints who are there in eternal glory ; remember that they were once in the world as you are now, and

that they, in imitation of Me, had to endure many trials and afflictions before they entered their heavenly home. Were not My Apostles treated as fools by the world ? And the martyrs and the confessors, were they not tormented, exiled, and made to endure the most excruciating cruelties that men could invent against them ? Take courage, then ; in a little time I will come again, and will take you to Myself, that where I am you also may be.'

" Listen, then, my child, to these words of Jesus Christ," continues Blessed Suso, " and the burning desire you have of seeing God in Heaven, and of possessing the eternal happiness of the Saints, will give you courage to say : ' O my God, heap upon me now crosses, afflictions, pains and sufferings. Do not spare me ; for love of Thee, my Jesus, I willingly accept of everything Thou art pleased to send me.' "

V. The Cardinal Virtues : Temperance.

Temperance, which is the fourth Cardinal Virtue, consists in " bridling our inordinate desires " ; that means regulating the use we should make of the pleasures and the goods of this life.

A person who is guided by the virtue of temperance is simple in his habits, careful of how he uses his temporal possessions, full of modesty and gravity in his manner of living, and, even in his spiritual life moderating his practices of piety and regulating them in such a manner that they may not exceed his bodily powers, for this would arise from pride ; nor neglect them altogether, which would be the effect of sloth.

HE DESIRED TO THINK ONLY OF GOD.

We read in the Life of St. Macarius that a thought one day came into his mind that he would like to enjoy for five days without intermission the sweets of Paradise, by thinking only of God, and by speaking to Him all the time, as the angels do in Heaven. So he shut himself up in his cell for this purpose, and said to himself: "My soul, since thou hast taken up thy abode in Heaven, where thou hast God and the holy angels to speak to, see that thou dost not come down again, nor think at all of earthly things."

The first two days were full of heavenly sweetness; but on the third day he was so much tempted by Satan that he was obliged to cease his contemplation to drive away the temptations with which he was tormented. God, in this way, gave him to understand that this world is a place of trial, where we have to fight against temptations, and that it is only when this life is ended, and when we have reached Heaven, that we can enjoy, without fear of interruption, the contemplation of God.

THE BUNCH OF GRAPES.

Another time someone sent Macarius a beautiful bunch of grapes. He accepted the gift with gratitude, but would not eat of it.

There was, at a little distance, a solitary who was sick, so he sent it to him. This good man, also wishing to mortify himself, did not touch it, but sent it to another who he thought might need it more than he did. He also, thinking this to be an ex-

cellent opportunity for an act of mortification, sent it to a neighbouring monk ; but he too refused to touch it, and sent it to another, who also would not eat it, but sent it to someone else. Thus the bunch of grapes passed from one cell to another, until, in the end, it reached, a second time, that of Macarius. When the Saint saw how great was the spirit of penance among the monks, he gave thanks to God, and added, " They did not eat it, neither will I."

THE AUSTERITIES OF ST. SIMEON STYLITE.

St. Simeon Stylite, having resolved to leave the world and live for God alone, went to a certain monastery in the East, and placed himself under the direction of the holy Abbot Heliodorus. There he dwelt for ten years, trying every day to be more and more perfect.

At the end of that time he left the monastery, and went to dwell alone in the caves and silence of the wilderness. During the first Lent he spent there he thought he would imitate Our Blessed Lord and Moses and Elias, who fasted forty days without partaking of any food. But a certain venerable solitary whom he consulted told him that by doing this he would be tempting God, and might easily allow pride to enter his heart ; so by his advice he procured ten loaves and a jar of water, which he placed in the cave.

At the end of Lent the solitary went to visit him. He found the loaves untouched, but Simeon was extremely weak from the rigour of the fast. The old man moistened his lips with water, and gave

him a little of the bread, and he soon revived. In this way he spent the following twenty-eight Lents, but after that time he modified the severity of his fasting.

VI. First Eminent Good Work : Prayer.

Much has already been written in these books about prayer, its necessity and its power with God. It will be sufficient in this place, my child, to add one or two other examples. In them you will see how the Saints loved to pray, and how their greatest delight was to spend long hours in speaking to God.

ST. FRANCIS BORGIA AT PRAYER.

St. Francis Borgia spent eight hours every day in prayer ; he would willingly have spent a much longer time, but his Superiors would not allow him. When the eight hours were done, and when they came to tell him that the time granted him for prayer was ended, he would earnestly ask them, in the Name of Jesus Christ, to give him a few minutes more. " In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ," he would say, " give me a few minutes more, only a little quarter of an hour."

This is how the Saints loved prayer, my child. How different were they from many who think themselves to be good Christians, and yet feel even a quarter of an hour in one day very long, and become anxious to reach the end of their prayer as soon as possible ! Try to pray as the Saints did, and prayer will be to you a pleasure, as it was to them.

BROTHER MARIANUS DE LUGO AT PRAYER.

Marianus de Lugo was a lay-brother of the Order of St. Francis. Love of prayer was the great virtue which distinguished him even in that holy Order, which has for one of its chief objects prayer and contemplation of heavenly things.

Long before the daylight appeared, he rose and performed the work entrusted to him by his Superiors, that he might the sooner reach the chapel for prayer. Frequently he would remain for several hours standing or kneeling before the altar, his eyes raised up towards Heaven, and his whole soul wrapped in Divine contemplation, while his countenance beamed with celestial brightness and tears of joy ran down his cheeks. It would seem as if God desired to show in his person that His delight is to converse with the simple.

Satan could not behold this fervour without attempting to destroy it. The evil spirits used to appear to him in the forms of hideous animals in order to distract him; but all their efforts were in vain; he had only to utter the holy Names of Jesus and Mary, and immediately they were put to flight.

At other times the Evil One made use of pious persons to attain his end, by inspiring them to admonish the holy man that his continual prayer would endanger his health, and that he ought to moderate his devotions lest pride might arise within him.

His answer to them was: "My friends, without prayer it is impossible to live in the state of grace, or to walk in the way of virtue, as we ought."

But in all these temptations God consoled His servant. Frequently did He appear to him to encourage him, telling him that, on account of his constant desire of being united to Him by prayer, he was always ready to grant him, for himself and for his brethren, whatever he might ask.

My child, we can never speak too often to God, and it is by prayer that we speak to Him. Jesus Christ Himself tells us to " pray always."

Palmier Seraph., i. 12.

VII.—The Second Eminent Good Work: Fasting.

Fasting is a virtue which was practised by the pagans themselves to appease the wrath of Heaven. In the Holy Scriptures we see how the people of Ninive, when threatened by the prophet of God with entire destruction, endeavoured to avert their terrible fate by fasting and works of penance. How much more reason have we, my child, who are the special children of God, obliged to have recourse to the same means to turn away His face from our sins, and blot out all our iniquities!

JONAS AND THE PEOPLE OF NINIVE.

In the book of the prophet Jonas we read: " Now the word of the Lord came to Jonas the son of Amathi, saying: ' Arise, and go to Ninive the great city, and preach in it: for the wickedness thereof is come up before Me. . . .'

" And Jonas arose, and went to Ninive, according

to the word of the Lord : now Ninive was a great city of three days' journey.

" And Jonas began to enter into the city one day's journey : and he cried, and said : ' Yet forty days, and Ninive shall be destroyed.'

" And the men of Ninive believed in God : and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least. And the word came to the king of Ninive : and he rose up from his throne, and cast away his robe from him, and was clothed in sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published in Ninive from the mouth of the king and of his princes, saying : ' Let neither men nor beasts, oxen nor sheep, taste anything : let them not feed, nor drink water. And let men and beasts be covered with sackcloth, and cry to the Lord with all their strength, and let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the iniquity that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn, and forgive : and will turn away from His fierce anger, and we shall not perish ?'

" And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way : and God had mercy with regard to the evil which He had said that He would do to them, and He did it not." *Jonas* 1, 3.

ST. PACHOMIUS AND ST. PALEMON.

It is related in the history of the Fathers of the desert that there once dwelt in the wilderness of Thebais a very holy man called Palemon.

Pachomius, another hermit of eminent sanctity, having heard of the austere life he led, conceived the

project of going to the desert, that he might place himself under his guidance.

When he reached the cell in which Palemon dwelt, and witnessed his fastings and watchings and other penances he imposed upon himself, instead of the severe life shaking his resolution, it only increased his desire of imitating him.

For twelve years he lived near him, fasting and praying as he did, and labouring with his hands, not only to keep himself from the dangers of idleness, but also that he might be enabled to assist those who were in need.

These two holy men lived so sparingly that they seemed to be already delivered from the necessity of partaking of food for the support of their lives. On festival days, especially on the Feast of Easter, they relaxed somewhat their rigorous mode of life.

One Easter morning Palemon said to his companion : " Prepare some food to-day of a better kind, in honour of the joy we should feel at the Lord's resurrection."

Pachomius did as he was asked, and poured a little oil over the herbs which always formed their daily food. But when Palemon was about to partake of it, he burst forth into tears, and, striking his breast, said : " What am I about to do ? My beloved Saviour was crucified for me, and how can I touch this delicate food ?"

So the food remained untouched, which to him was in appearance so delicious, though to others it would have appeared very insipid. *Life of St. Pachomius.*

MACARIUS VISITS THE MONKS OF TABENNA.

It happened that when St. Macarius was already advanced in years he heard that in the monastery of Tabenna fourteen hundred monks were living under the direction of the holy Abbot Pachomius, of whom we have already spoken, and were leading lives of great austerity. A desire to go and visit them arose in his mind, that he might be edified by their example. So he changed his clothing, and, putting on the dress of a workman, set out for Tabenna.

After walking through the desert for fifteen days, he reached the gate of the monastery, and asked to see the Superior. When he was led into his presence, he said: "Be pleased, Father, to receive me into the company of your monks, that I may, like them, serve God by following the rules of this monastery."

But St. Pachomius, who did not know who his visitor was, answered: "You are now too old to begin this kind of life. One requires to come here when very young, in order that he may learn by degrees the practice of the rigorous life our Rule imposes. At your age you will soon become wearied of it, and then you will leave us, and, returning to the world, will speak ill of us."

Saying this, he went away; but St. Macarius remained at the gate for seven days without eating or drinking. At the end of that time he sent for the Abbot, and said to him: "Be pleased, my Father, to receive me into your house on trial; if I cannot fast as the others do, or if I cannot work like them, send me away."

St. Pachomius, seeing his great fervour, at length consented; but the other monks were displeased, and felt in their heart a secret dislike for the old man.

When Lent came, St. Macarius watched to see in what manner the monks spent that time of penance. He saw that some of them ate only once a day, towards evening, that others took a little food only once in two days, and some only once in five days. Others stood all night, and sat only when at work during the day.

As for himself, he took some palm-leaves, which he soaked with water, and, going into a retired place, spent the forty days of Lent in silence, praying and working all the time, and eating nothing but a few cabbage-leaves on Sunday, and this more to avoid pride than through necessity.

When Lent was over, the monks went to the Abbot and said: "Whence did that man come? He cannot be of the same flesh and blood as we are, for he has surpassed us all. Send him away, for his presence here among us is a continual reproach to us. If you do not send him away, we ourselves will all leave you."

The holy Abbot, having heard how the old man had spent the time of Lent, asked God to let him know who he was; and God revealed to him that it was St. Macarius.

Going up to him, Pachomius took him by the hand, and led him into the church, and, having embraced him, he said: "So it is really you, O Macarius, whom I see! and you did not tell me! It is now a long time since I first heard of you, and I have ever had a great desire to see you. I thank you for the lesson

you have given to my disciples ; it will keep them humble when tempted to be proud of the austerities they practise. You have indeed edified us ; go back now to your monastery, and remember us in your prayers."

VIII. The Third Eminent Good Work: Almsdeeds.

God has not placed us all in the same position in life ; to some He has given worldly possessions in great abundance ; to others He has given them less abundantly, and some He has placed in poverty.

In the dispositions of His Divine Providence, He has thus given to some an opportunity of gaining merit for Heaven by disposing of their earthly possessions in favour of their poorer brethren, and to others that of aiding by their prayers those who have befriended them.

This virtue is not only most pleasing to God, but has attached to it magnificent promises of unspeakable rewards which He will one day bestow in return on those who practise it.

"Lay up treasures in heaven."

The following are the eloquent words of Bossuet in praise of the virtue of almsgiving :

" Far from losing your riches in distributing them among the needy, you secure them more firmly than if you had hid them in the strongest receptacle. The poor, to whom you have given them, will one day return them to you again, not as you gave them to them, but in a manner entirely changed. While in

your possession they were perishable ; you might at any moment lose them. In their possession they become incorruptible, and can never be destroyed.

" They are more powerful than the most potent monarch. Kings, by their edicts, give a certain value to the pieces of money which bear their impress ; the poor give to these same pieces a value which is infinite as soon as their hands touch them.

" Lay up, then, for yourselves treasures which can never fail. Lay up treasures, but lay them up where they may be in security against the chances of wars, or from the hands of robbers, or in the many vicissitudes of life. Deposit them in the hands of God."

" He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord. Give, and it shall be given to you ; good measure and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall they give into your bosom."

St. Luke vi. 38.

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT AND THE SHIPWRECKED MERCHANT.

St. John the Deacon relates that one day a poor man went to St. Gregory, and begged of him to bestow on him an alms. His pale and emaciated face told of the sufferings he had endured ; his clothing was falling to pieces, and he had no shoes on his feet to protect him from the sharp stones of the road.

He had been a merchant of considerable wealth, but had lost all in a shipwreck ; he himself had been preserved from a watery grave by the manifest protection of God.

St. Gregory, full of compassion for him in his misfortune, commanded his servant to give him six pieces of silver.

A few days afterwards the same man once more approached St. Gregory, again beseeching him to grant him assistance in his needs. This the Saint did, and he went away full of joy and gratitude.

He came back a third time, saying that all he had received was expended, that he had no friend to help him, and that death from hunger threatened him if the Saint would not once more help him.

St. Gregory called his servant, and told him to bestow further alms on the unfortunate man. The servant told him that his purse was empty, as he had already given in alms all that it had contained.

"Is there nothing in the house of any value which I might give him?" asked the Saint.

"Nothing but the little silver dish in which your mother is accustomed to place the vegetables you take at meal-time."

"Go and bring it hither," said St. Gregory, with joy in his voice, "and give it to this poor man at once, lest he might depart in sadness without the consolation he came here to seek."

The poor man received with accents of great thankfulness the rich present the Saint gave him. He never again came back to him to ask an alms, but only to enrich him for what he had given, as he seems afterwards to have prospered once more in his worldly affairs.

It is generally thought that it was an angel under the appearance of a merchant who had come to solicit his assistance that he might receive a greater

recompense for his generosity. God was pleased to make manifest how precious in His eyes was this action of the Saint, for He bestowed on him the gift of working great miracles, as we read in his Life.

La Charité enseignée aux enfants, p. 8.

"CHARITY COVERETH A MULTITUDE OF SINS."

There was once a young man who had passed his youth in sin, but who afterwards sincerely wished to change his life. At first he thought that this would be impossible for him, for he feared that whatever he might do would be of no avail to excite contrition in his heart.

One day as he was plunged in deep melancholy he left his house in order to seek some relief in the society of his companions. On leaving his house he met at the door a poor beggar. As soon as he saw him, he remembered the words of Jesus Christ: "Whatsoever you have done to the least of My brethren you have done it to Me." He then went back, and, taking a loaf of bread, he cast himself on his knees before the beggar, and gave it to him, praying at the same time in these words: "My Lord Jesus Christ, I adore Thee in the person of this poor man. Most gladly would I give Thee my whole heart, but I cannot, because it is too hardened; for the present, at least, take this loaf of bread which I am still able to give, and do with my heart whatsoever Thou wilt."

Oh, the wonderful power of prayer when accompanied with works of charity! No sooner had he prayed thus than he felt in his heart so bitter a sorrow for all his sins that he shed a torrent of tears.

He made a good Confession, and ever afterwards lived a pious life, receiving from God many extraordinary graces.

When we give an alms to one in need we should not think of the person to whom we give it, nor take into account our liking or disliking him, but only of God, Whom we assist in His person, for are we not all the children of God, and has not Jesus Christ died for the redemption of all? St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, says: "There is no respect of persons with God."

THE JEWESS AND THE BISHOP.

On one occasion it happened that a poor woman in great distress went to a pious Archbishop in France to ask of him an alms.

"My lord, what shall I give her?" said the secretary to him.

"How old is she?" asked the venerable prelate.

"She appears to be about seventy years of age."

"Does she seem to be in great need of help?"

"She says she is, my lord."

"We must, then, believe her word. Give her twenty-five francs" (one pound sterling).

"Twenty-five francs, my lord!" said the secretary in astonishment; "that is surely too much to give to one like her; moreover, she is a Jewess."

"A Jewess!" exclaimed the Archbishop.

"Yes, my lord."

"Oh, that makes the case quite different. Go and give her fifty francs" (two pounds), "and thank her for coming to honour me with a visit."

Fleurs de la morale.

THE POOR WOMAN AND THE PRINCE.

Father Lacordaire, in one of his Conferences, related the following incident:

A certain Polish Prince, who was known to everyone for his unbelief, had just finished the composition of a book written expressly against the immortality of the soul. He was about to send his manuscript to the printer, when one day, as he was walking near his house, he saw approaching him a woman bathed in tears. When she came near him, she fell on her knees at his feet, and said to him in accents of great grief: "Good Prince, my husband has just died, and his soul at this moment is perhaps in Purgatory. Oh, how much he must suffer there! I would desire to have the Holy Mass offered up for him, but, alas! I am so poor that I have not even the little offering which is usually made to the priest on such an occasion. I have come, then, to ask you in your charity to give me as much as will procure for him this benefit."

Although the Prince saw nothing in the request but the outcome of a superstitious mind, yet he had not the courage to send away the poor woman, since by a little alms he could procure for her some relief in her sorrow.

As soon as she had received it she hastened to the church, and giving it to the priest, besought him to say Mass for her intention.

Three days afterwards, towards evening, the Prince was sitting in his room reading once more the manuscript of the book he was about to publish. Suddenly he heard a slight noise behind him as if some-

one had come into the room. Raising his eyes, he saw near him a man clad in the garments usually worn by labourers in the country. Surprised at this unexpected intrusion, he rose to put the man out ; but he disappeared as suddenly as he had come.

He immediately summoned one of his attendants.

" Why did you permit anyone," he said, " to come hither without having previously informed me ?"

" Of whom do you speak ?" said the attendant.

" That man, that labourer who has just gone out."

" But, my lord," answered the other, " I never allowed anyone to come near your room, much less to enter it. I have seen no such stranger in the house."

This answer quieted him for the moment, although he was convinced in his own mind that he had seen someone. He said no more at the time.

Next day the same thing occurred.

This time the anger of the Prince was at its height. He immediately arose, and, rushing towards the apparition, was about to seize it, when it again suddenly disappeared as on the previous night.

He then made the most diligent search throughout the house, asking every one of the servants and inmates if any of them had seen the man enter. But the answer of every one of them was the same : " We have seen no one."

Overcome by the strangeness of the event, he awaited with impatience the next evening, determined to personally investigate the matter.

On the third evening, at the same time, the poor man reappeared. But this time, before the Prince could utter one word, the unknown man thus addressed him :

"Prince, I have come to thank you. I am the husband of that poor woman who besought you to give her an alms that she might be able to have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered up for the repose of my soul. This work of charity was most agreeable to God, and He has permitted me to come in person to thank you, and to inform you that there is another life hereafter, and that the soul is immortal, and can never die. It is for you now to profit by this admonition, and to make use of the favour God has granted you, that so you may save your soul."

Saying these words the countryman disappeared, leaving the Prince profoundly agitated. Immediately calling together all his servants, he told them what he had seen and heard, shedding at the same time many tears.

Then, going to his desk where his impious manuscript lay, he took it up, and burned it to ashes in the fire. *La Charité enseignée aux Enfants*, p. 177.

L

THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST

I. Charity.

The Catechism tells us that there are twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost. These fruits are the effects which the Holy Spirit of God produces in the souls of those who are docile to His inspirations, and who endeavour to serve and love God with their whole hearts.

The first fruit of the Holy Ghost is Charity.

Charity is that virtue which produces in our souls a love of God above all things, and a love for our neighbour for His sake.

A VISION OF JESUS AND MARY.

"On the Festival of Our Lady's Purification, being in the Church of the Friars-Minor at Foligno, early in the morning," relates Blessed Angela, "I heard a voice saying to me, 'It was at this hour that the Blessed Mother of God came with her Divine Son into the Temple.' I was then rapt in spirit, and I really beheld Our Lady enter. My soul was filled with intense joy when I saw her, but for a time I was afraid to go near her. But Our Lady, seeing my hesitation, held out to me the holy Child Jesus,

saying : ' O thou who lovest my Divine Son so much, come and take Him from me.'

" She then placed Him in my arms. He seemed to be asleep, for His eyes were shut. Then she sat down as if she were fatigued after a long journey. She looked so lovely as she sat beside me that I could scarcely withdraw my eyes from her to look at her holy Child, whom I pressed to my breast.

" At this moment Jesus opened His eyes, and looked lovingly on me. This look filled my soul with so much joy that I should have died on the spot had He not sustained me by His Divine power. He then said to me : ' I have come to you and have presented Myself before you, that you may offer yourself to Me.' Immediately I did as He desired, and I knew that the offering was most pleasing to Him."

" MY BOOK IS JESUS CRUCIFIED."

On one occasion one of the companions of St. Francis found him weeping bitterly, and asked him the reason of his tears.

The Saint answered : " I weep when I think of the terrible sufferings and ignominies of my beloved Saviour, but what causes me to grieve most is, that men, for whose sake He endured all the torments of His Passion, do not love Him, or even think of Him." Whenever he heard a lamb bleating, it brought to his mind the Lamb without spot Who died upon the Cross for the sins of His people, and he felt his heart penetrated with profound compassion and love.

During his last great illness, when he was advised to allow someone to read to him from a pious book, he answered : " *My* book is Jesus Crucified."

Life of St. Francis of Assisi.

ST. IGNATIUS'S MAGNANIMITY.

St. Ignatius was so much imbued with charity towards his neighbour, that he was accustomed to say : " If I were at the point of death, and the assurance given me that I would immediately enter into the possession of the eternal happiness of Heaven, and if God should ask me to remain on earth for a few years longer at the risk of my salvation in order that I might gain souls to Him, I would most willingly consent to remain."

On hearing these words one day, someone remarked to him that he considered it to be a most imprudent thing to expose himself to lose his own soul for the sake of saving the souls of others, " because," he added, " charity to ourselves requires of us, in such an important affair, to look to our own eternal interests in the first place before those of our neighbour."

The Saint, inspired by his zeal for the salvation of souls, and full of confidence in God, answered : " Is God perchance a tyrant, or is He so indifferent to the welfare of one whom He sees placing himself in danger for the promotion of His glory by endeavouring to save souls for whom His Divine Son died, that He would condemn such a one to hell-fire ? Oh no ; such a thought would be repugnant to the goodness and mercy of God."

L'Apostolat de la Prière, p. 38.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI'S GREAT DESIRE.

One day St. Francis of Assisi was praying in the woods. In the midst of his prayer he cried out to

God: "O my God, take pity on poor sinners!" When He said these words, Our Lord Himself appeared to him, and said: "Your wish, O Francis, is just what I have most at heart, and willingly do I grant you what you ask of Me."

ST. COLLETTE'S LOVE FOR SOULS.

St. Collette one day asked Our Lord for the conversion of a thousand sinners. When she had finished her prayer, she became frightened at what she had asked, and thought that she had been too rash in asking for the conversion of so many. The Blessed Virgin then appeared to her, and showed her that she had not asked too much, and that she had already obtained the conversion of many sinners by her prayers.

A POOR MAN'S WISH.

There was once a poor man who lived in the country who had no learning. He was often seen to weep, and to be filled, as it were, with some secret grief. One day a priest who knew him, seeing him in this sad condition, asked him what was the cause of his sorrow. "My Father," he replied, "I am filled with sorrow when I see so many poor sinners wilfully throwing themselves into Hell when they could so easily obtain Heaven. Oh, I wish I had been a priest, so that I might go about and preach. Then I would be able, I am sure, to bring many souls to God."

The priest answered him: "My friend, it is not necessary for you to be a priest that you may bring souls to God. You can preach to them, even more eloquently than any priest could, for you can always

show them good example, and pray for them. Good example and prayer are infallible means of bringing sinners back to God."

LOVE OF THE BLESSED CURÉ OF ARS FOR SOULS.

One day a certain priest asked the Curé of Ars what he would do if God gave him his choice to go into Heaven at once, or to labour for many years in this world for the conversion of sinners.

He answered : " I think that I would remain on earth."

" Is that possible ?" exclaimed the other. " Would you not rather be in Heaven happy with the Saints, and free from all temptations and dangers ?"

The good Curé answered : " Yes, it is true the Saints are happy, but they are living on their interest. They cannot any longer glorify God by labouring, by sufferings, and by sacrifices for the salvation of souls."

" And would you wish to live in the world to the very end of it for the sake of poor sinners ?"

" Yes, I would," he replied.

" In that case," continued the priest, " you would have plenty of time for labour ; you would not require to rise so early."

" Yes, my friend," was his answer. " I would rise at midnight ; I do not fear fatigue ; I would be the happiest man in the world if I had not to appear before God with my sins." Saying this, he burst into tears.

II. Joy.

Joy is the second fruit of the Holy Ghost.

True Christian joy, my child, is not like the joy the world offers, which consists only in the enjoyment of a momentary pleasure which always produces remorse, but in the joy that is to be found only in the love and service of God—a joy surpassing all understanding, and a joy in death which is the recompense of a good life, and which will bring you to the joys of Heaven, joys no one can take from you.

THE MEETING ON THE NILE.

St. Macarius sometimes left his cell to visit solitaries who dwelt in other parts of the deserts of Egypt, that from their example he might learn how to serve God with more perfection. Whatever he saw most perfect in any of these, he himself always tried to imitate.

On one of these occasions he went to visit another anchorite who bore the same name as he did. It happened that they were crossing the Nile together in a boat, in which there were also two tribunes or noble officers of the Imperial army. These were arrayed in magnificent garments, and were accompanied by a numerous train of attendants, also attired with great splendour. The tribunes saw the two solitaries sitting at the farther end of the boat, clad in the poorest clothing, but their countenances wearing an expression of perfect happiness. This astonished them : they could not understand how so

much happiness could be found in the midst of such poverty.

So one of the officers, going over to where they sat, said to them : " You appear to be very happy although you seem to be poor."

They answered him : " You are right, for we are very happy ; indeed, our name signifies happiness ; but if we are so happy in having forsaken the world with all its goods, how miserable must those be who live attached to it !"

These words, spoken in a tone of earnestness, made so great an impression on the officer, that, as soon as he went home, he took off all his splendid garments, gave great alms to the poor, and, leaving the world, went to spend the rest of his days in solitude, that he too might be happy, not only here, but also in eternity.

ST. GENEVIEVE IN THE FIELDS.

St. Genevieve belonged to a noble family in France, and was born about the middle of the fifth century. In those days it was not thought to be degrading in high families to tend the cattle in the fields. Nothing pleased the little Genevieve so much as when she was told to take her shepherd's crook in her hand and go to tend the sheep. It was during these days she was happiest, for she had no one to disturb her, and she was able to speak all day to her Heavenly Father, and to think on heavenly things.

If she saw a wolf coming near the sheep, she thought of Satan, who goes about seeking to devour souls. When she heard her sheep-dog bark, it put her in mind that she should be always on the watch

lest the enemy might come ; and the sheep and the lambs, themselves so gentle and so tame, taught her that, like her Spouse, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God she should be humble and meek. Thus did the holy child Genevieve live for God alone in perfect happiness and joy. *Life of St. Genevieve.*

BLESSED ANGELA'S JOY AT DEATH.

" As the Feast of Our Divine Lord's Nativity drew near, Blessed Angela, who was dying, said to those who were around her, ' The Son of God has been pleased to present me to His Eternal Father, and I heard from His Divine lips these words : " My well-beloved spouse, I do not wish that you should come to Me in sorrow, but in joy, as it behoves a queen to be received into her kingdom. Come, then, my dearest friend, my most beloved spouse ; come, for all the Saints in Heaven await you with great joy. I will not send an angel or a Saint to bring you to Heaven ; I Myself will meet you and bring you thither, for you have been most dear and agreeable to My Majesty." '

" During the day preceding her death she was often heard to say : ' Eternal Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.'

" Those who were kneeling around her bed said, while the tears ran down their cheeks, ' Alas ! it is now but too true ; you are going to leave us, you are going to forsake us.'

" She replied : ' Yes, my dearest friends, I must tell you plainly, it is now time for me to go.'

" Her pains had now entirely left her, and she lay calmly awaiting the hour of her departure, and a

heavenly smile lighted up her countenance, as if she already saw the inheritance promised to the just for ever.

" Towards evening, on the 4th day of January, sweetly smiling, she calmly passed away, and her holy soul went to Heaven in the company of her beloved Jesus, Whom she had so tenderly loved.

" This was in the year 1309. Her body rests in the Church of the Friars-Minor at Foligno, where many miracles made her dear to the people."

It is in this way, my child, that those who serve God live and die. May this fruit of " joy " be in your soul also during your whole lifetime and at the moment of your death !

III. Peace.

Peace is another of the fruits of the Holy Ghost—not that peace which the world calls peace, but that peace the angels announced to the shepherds on the night when Our Divine Lord was born, when they sang.: " Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will " ; that peace of which Our Lord Himself spoke when He said to His disciples : " My peace I leave to you ; My peace I give unto you."

ST. PAUL, THE FIRST HERMIT IN THE DESERT.

St. Paul was a rich Christian of the Province of Thebes, and was well educated in Greek and Egyptian literature. He was, moreover, an excellent Christian, and loved and served God with his whole heart.

When the persecution of Decius and Valerian broke out and began to spread over the East, St. Paul, with his sister and brother-in-law, left the city and went to live in the country, where they hoped to dwell in peace till the storm should blow over. But they had not been there long when his brother-in-law went to the Governor and denounced him as a Christian in order that he might inherit his wealth. The Saint, having discovered his treachery, secretly left his house and fled into the desert.

At the foot of a high rock he found a cave, at the mouth of which there was a large stone which covered it. Near it was a fountain of water, and above it an old palm-tree, which stretched its branches over the top of the cave. In this cavern he found a number of rooms, which at one time must have been occupied by money-forgers, for he discovered near the place the dies and implements which they had made use of for that work.

Here St. Paul took up his abode. At that time he was only twenty-two years of age. At first he lived on the fruit with which the palm-tree supplied him. He also made use of its leaves for clothing when that he had taken with him was worn out. He passed his life here in peace far from the tumult of the world. His time was employed in prayer and in the contemplation of heavenly things, and he never for a moment regretted the temporal goods he had left in the world, since his renouncing them procured for him so much true peace, and since he was able more easily to obtain possession of those treasures which never fade in Heaven.

THE HOLY PRIEST MONTEGAZON.

During the terrible Revolution that undermined the kingdom of France at the end of last century, a certain holy priest, named Montegazon, was driven from his home by the insurgents, and compelled to flee from village to village. But, faithful to his mission as a priest wherever he went, he gave the consolations of religion to the scattered people, even at the risk of his life.

After days and nights of fatigue, he heard that the enemy was following him to seize him and put him to death. On hearing this, he fled into the mountains, where for some time he wandered about, till at length, overcome with weariness, he sank down on the ground.

"O my God!" he cried out, "I cannot go a step farther." Then, taking the pyx which he carried, containing the sacred Host, he placed it on his breast, saying: "O Jesus, my beloved Master, I have for many days carefully watched over Thee; I beseech Thee now to take care of me, and preserve me from falling into the hands of my enemies."

Saying these words, he fell asleep in peace, and with the sweet confidence that Jesus would watch over him. Now, it happened that the soldiers, who were in pursuit, came up to the place where he was lying, but they passed by without seeing him.

God thus rewarded the childlike confidence of His servant.

IV. Patience.

Patience is that fruit of the Holy Ghost which arises from the thought that if we bear with resignation whatever crosses God may be pleased to send us in this life, we shall obtain from Him an everlasting reward hereafter.

THE ROSES OF PARADISE.

St. Felix of Cantalicia suffered continually from internal pains, but he was never heard to complain ; on the contrary, he was always cheerful. He used to call them God's particular favours, and the " roses of Paradise." *From his Life.*

ST. CLARE IN HER LAST ILLNESS.

St. Clare, far from complaining of the terrible sufferings she endured during the last few weeks of her life, gave thanks to God for sending them to her.

" O my Divine Saviour," she exclaimed in her ecstasy, " eternal thanks be given to Thee for sending me these pains. Thou hast permitted me to drink of the chalice of Thy sufferings. Oh, how sweet to me is that chalice ! Nothing now can give me sorrow nor afflict me ; everything is easy for me, because in my heart I love Thee, my Saviour."

The other religious were standing near her, weeping ; but she consoled them, and said to them joyfully that they would meet again in the Kingdom of Heaven. Then she died, as if she had fallen into a peaceful slumber. *Catéchisme Pratique*, i. 328.

BLESSED STEPHENA OF SONCINO.

Blessed Stephena, a nun of the Order of St. Dominic, being one day conducted in a vision into Heaven, saw there the souls of some persons whom she had known when they were on earth. They were high up among the Seraphim near the throne of God. She asked the angel who was showing her these things what they had done while in the world to merit so much glory.

The angel answered her: "When these blessed ones were on earth, they lived in perfect submission to the Holy Will of God, and bore with patience all the crosses He was pleased to send them. Therefore God has exalted them in Heaven to a high degree of glory, and given them a place amongst those who are for ever standing around His throne."

Lives of the Saints.

RESIGNATION IN POVERTY.

In a little town of Italy there lived a young girl who was confined to bed from sickness. She was obliged always to lie on one side, and could not be moved without suffering great pain. Moreover, she was poor, and her bed consisted of some straw covered with rough canvas.

The people who came to see her were edified by her patience. They never heard her complain, and she seemed to be always joyful and happy.

One day someone told her of a terrible famine that was visiting Italy, and how the people were reduced to the greatest want. This news seemed to

make no impression on her. She heard it with signs of indifference.

"How can you hear of this sad event," said one of those present, "without being moved with compassion? How can you be so indifferent, when you know that so many of the people are pining away in hunger and want? And you yourself, too; how can you be so calm and patient in the midst of such suffering as you endure, and in your great poverty?"

"What reason have I to complain?" she answered. "Is it not the good God that directs all these things? When you spoke of the famine to me, I raised up my mind to God in Heaven, and said: 'It is Thy sweet will, O my God; may it be done!' And as for myself, I am always like a little bird under the wings of God's Providence. Why, then, should I be unhappy, or why should I yield to feelings of sorrow or impatience?"

It is in this way that those who love God with their whole hearts accept with joy whatever He appoints.

V. Benignity.

Benignity is that fruit of the Holy Ghost which is more generally known by the name of kindness, especially towards those who are our inferiors, in contradistinction to that harshness and hardness of heart so greatly condemned by Our Lord.

How St. Honoratus Gained Souls.

St. Honoratus, founder of the celebrated monastery of Lerins, and afterwards Bishop of Arles in the fifth century, was, on account of his benign dis

position, the most amiable and the most beloved man of his time. He was born in the country of Toul, in the midst of the comforts and riches of this world, and his father had placed in him high hopes of his future worldly greatness.

But Honoratus, knowing how empty are all earthly honours and dignities, resolved to sever himself for ever from all worldly things. In order with more certainty to persevere in this resolution, he left his home, and for a time travelled as a pilgrim in Greece and in Italy, and finally took up his abode in Provence in the territory of Frejus.

The little island, or, rather, the high precipitous rocks which formed the Isle of Lerins, seemed to him to be a place most suitable for dwelling in a total separation from the world. In vain did those to whom he had confided his intention of going thither and of making it his dwelling-place endeavour to dissuade him from doing so. They told him that it was the abode of venomous serpents, and most dangerous to life. His faith arose above all their fears, and rendered their admonitions fruitless.

As soon as he went thither the reptiles seemed in the beginning to respect him and his disciples, and finally disappeared altogether from the island. In a short time that place, till then held in so much abhorrence by everyone, became the centre of one of the principal Orders of the Church. The super-eminent virtues of these great servants of God were the edification of all the people, and for centuries the monks of Lerins were held in honour as being the most zealous among the apostles of the French nation.

From all parts there came men of every age and

rank to place themselves under the guidance of St. Honoratus, drawn thither by the reputation of his sanctity and his amiable disposition. His love for his neighbour was so deep and affectionate, and his conduct towards them so pleasing, that it was impossible for one who saw or spoke to him not to love and admire him. St. Eucher and St. Hilarius, two of his disciples, used often to say that a painter desiring to produce a picture to represent charity, could not possibly choose a better model than the features of St. Honoratus.

SCHOUPPE: *Inst. relig.*, ii. 330.

ST. ODILO'S GREAT SWEETNESS.

It is related in the life of St. Odilo that all the religious of the monastery over which he ruled loved him. Though severe to himself, he was kind to them, and treated them with even maternal affection. Some who thought that he was too indulgent said to him: "Father, your kindness may lead to a want of regularity in the monastery, and you shall be responsible to God for the consequences."

"My children," he answered, "I would rather have to answer to God for too much kindness than for too much severity."

VI. GOODNESS.

Another fruit of the Holy Ghost is Goodness. Goodness is the fruit of piety and the fear of the Lord. It shows itself outwardly by our good conduct, and the good example that our life, "which is in God," gives to all who are witnesses of it.

GOOD EXAMPLE LED THEM TO GOD.

Saints Rufinus and Valerian were two noble Romans who were sent into Northern Gaul to preach the true Faith. They were both so fervent, so mortified in their lives, so edifying in their conversation, that they gained the confidence and the affection of the people among whom they lived, so that many of them began to listen to them, and in course of time besought them to make them the children of the great God whom they served, by bestowing on them the grace of Baptism. *Saints*, June 14.

THE NOBLEMAN IN THE TYROL.

During the seventeenth century a nobleman was dying at Innsbruck, in the Tyrol. A great number of his friends and relations had assembled round his death-bed to wait for the end which they saw approaching.

Whilst they were there, the physician gave him a very bitter medicine to drink, and, to encourage him to take it and to lessen the nausea it would cause, he asked him to drink it in memory of the person he loved most.

The dying man looked around him from one to the other in silence; then, fixing his eyes on a picture hanging on the wall, representing Jesus in the Garden of Olives, he said: "Ah, it is for Thee, my most beloved Friend, that I drink this bitter cup—Thee Who for my salvation didst drink the bitter chalice Thy Heavenly Father sent Thee, even to the dregs." *Catéchisme Pratique*, i. 328.

VII. Longanimity.

Longanimity is the seventh fruit of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Scriptures contain these consoling words : " As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live." Hence He bears patiently with the sins of His children, that they may not perish for ever, but may return to His service, and so save their souls. In this He has taught us by His example to imitate Him, and bear patiently with those who offend us, hoping that one day they may cease doing us wrong, and become once more our friends on earth, as we hope that they will one day be our companions in Heaven.

JOSEPH, THE YOUNG JEW.

In the days of trouble and agitation which marked the reign of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, when the pagans still lived in the superstitious worship of their false gods, and when the Jews still assembled in their synagogues, and when those who adhered to Jesus Christ in the profession of the true Religion came forth from the silence of the catacombs to raise up temples in honour of the one true God, there lived in Tiberiad a young man of Jewish origin, whose name was Joseph, who was much esteemed by the Jewish patriarch who dwelt in the midst of his nation.

When this patriarch, already advanced in years, was at the point of death, he sent for the Christian Bishop of Tiberiad, and on his arrival gave orders

that those who were around his death-bed should retire and leave him alone with his visitor.

Joseph, anxious to know what was to take place, looked through an opening in the wood of the door, and, to his intense surprise, saw the Bishop preparing everything necessary for the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism, and finally baptizing his Superior, the patriarch.

From that instant the young Jew's mind was filled with feelings of doubt and agitation concerning the religion which he had hitherto professed, more especially as he heard a secret voice within him, to which he could not shut the ears of his soul, urging him to do so likewise. But he neglected these inspirations, and remained unconverted.

Then it happened that a book of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles fell into his hands. He read it with great earnestness, and while doing so, according to his own avowal, he seemed to hear within him the voice of Jesus Christ Himself, beseeching Him to embrace the true Faith. He also confessed that the same Jesus appeared to him in a vision, and said to him: "I am Jesus, Whom your fathers have crucified." Still he persevered in his spirit of resistance to the truth.

Not long afterwards he became dangerously ill, and all hope of his recovery was abandoned. One of the Jewish rabbis who assisted him, strange to say, whispered gently into his ear these words: "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who was crucified, will pronounce upon you the eternal sentence." He related also that on the same occasion the vision he formerly had reappeared to him, and he heard the

same words as before. Although greatly surprised at all these supernatural manifestations, he still refused to correspond with the graces that were given him. He recovered from his illness, but still continued to live as in times past.

Some time afterwards he met in the street a man possessed by an evil spirit, and Joseph, remembering from what he had read in the Gospels the power of the holy Name of Jesus, made on the forehead of the unfortunate man the sign of the Cross, while with his lips he uttered the holy Name, more through curiosity to learn the effect that would be produced than from devotion. The man was cured, and the account of what had taken place was spread throughout the surrounding country. Still Joseph continued to profess Judaism. These graces of God seemed not sufficiently strong to move his obstinate heart : trials and persecutions were needed to effect this. This last event raised in the minds of some of his co-religionists suspicions of his tendency towards Christianity, and they determined to watch him.

One day they surprised him while reading the Gospels, and immediately seized him and dragged him to the synagogue. They were making preparations to scourge him, when the Bishop of Tiberiad suddenly entered and delivered him from their hands. Without any delay he embarked on a ship which was bound for Sicily, but his enemies pursued him, and when they had captured him, they threw him into the sea. But by some means which appeared miraculous he was delivered from this danger. From that moment he avowed him-

self a Christian, and publicly announced his desire to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

The high consideration in which he was formerly held, and his present sincere attachment to the Christian Faith, joined with the many gifts and talents that had always distinguished him, soon gained for him the confidence of the Emperor Constantine himself, who raised him to the dignity of a Count of the Empire, and confided to his administration some of the most important offices of the State.

VEITH : *Les Sacrifices de paix*, 196.

VIII. MILDNESS.

The next fruit of the Holy Ghost is Mildness. Our Divine Lord proposes Himself as a model for our imitation in this virtue, when He said, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart," and it has been the desire of the Saints at all times to follow that lesson He gave us. This virtue is so dear to Him that He has in a very special manner promised the Kingdom of Heaven to those who possess it and practise it : "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land."

OUR LADY MEEK BEYOND ALL OTHERS.

The Church, in one of her most beautiful hymns to Our Lady—the "Ave Maris Stella"—salutes her in these words : "O Virgin, above all others great and holy, above all others meek and gentle."

And Our Blessed Lord Himself revealed to St. Bridget that among the reasons why His Most Holy

Mother was exalted above all the choirs of angels was her humility, which was the fruit of her meekness and the gentleness of her heart.

Revel. of St. Bridget.

ST. VINCENT OF PAUL, GENTLE AND MILD.

One of the virtues for which St. Vincent was most renowned was his meekness and gentle disposition. But this was the effect of a long struggle against his natural inclinations.

He was by nature inclined to anger and to what is known as a hasty temper. But this he struggled against and overcame.

One day he said to a dear friend who asked him how to cure a bad temper: "I will tell you my plan. When I see myself inclined to get angry, I pray at once to God to help me, and to make me meek; then, with a little care and by the grace of God, the passion goes away, and my good humour comes back to me. But if sometimes it does not go away at once, and when I feel it about to burst out in angry words, I immediately stop, keep my lips closed, and do nothing till it is over; and then, when the tempest is past, I find it easy to speak gently and act kindly."

ST. ODILO AND THE ROBBER.

One day a robber came to the monastery of St. Odilo and secretly stole a horse which belonged to the Abbot. When he was about to take the horse out of the stable, he felt himself, as it were, fixed to the ground so that he could not move. In

the morning the Saint found him there, and knew why he had come. He went over to him, and with a smiling countenance gave him a few pieces of money, saying: "My friend, it would not be just in me not to pay you for attending to my horse during the night. Go now in peace, but, I beseech you, do not sin again." The robber, touched by the Saint's generosity and fatherly kindness, became a sincere penitent.

IX. Faith.

The ninth fruit of the Holy Ghost is Faith. By this is meant that life of faith by which we look on all things, good or evil, as coming from God, and are constantly looking forward, as St. Paul did, to the reward promised to those who while on earth live and labour for God alone and for Heaven.

ST. SERANUS THE GARDENER.

Whosoever lives a life of faith will find means of instructing himself and of sanctifying himself at every step he takes. St. Seranus was only a simple gardener, but as he looked on the plants and flowers amongst which he laboured daily growing up until they arrived at maturity, he would say to himself: "This is how I ought to live to reach the end for which I was made; it is my duty to labour without ceasing to advance from virtue to virtue, and to perform all my actions, direct all my thoughts, and regulate all my desires, so as to attain that perfection that God requires of me." Godescard: *Vie de SS.*

ST. ALDERIC AT THE COURT OF THE EMPEROR.

When St. Alderic was a little boy, his parents brought him to the Court of Louis, the son of Charlemagne. The Emperor loved him: he was so noble in all his ways, so full of courage, and so truthful and straightforward in all his words; the boy was also surrounded with everything that this world can offer to make one happy.

But Alderic, although so young, did not allow his heart to rest on these things. He knew that riches and worldly joys and a life of pleasure are not only dangerous, but must all soon pass away. He used often to be heard saying to himself: "All the riches I enjoy are only the dust of the earth: why should I put any value on them?"

He was living in the midst of other boys who thought very differently from him; but he did not allow their bad example to change his resolution to love and serve God alone. The Child Jesus was the model he had always before his eyes, and he tried to do what Jesus did when He was a little boy like himself.

THE TARTARS BESIEGE THE CHURCH OF KIEW.

St. Hyacinth had just completed a magnificent church at Kiew, in Poland, which he dedicated to the Most Holy Mother of God. One day as he had just finished the celebration of Holy Mass, it was announced to him that the Tartars, the most implacable enemies of the Christian name, had reached the walls of the town, and were endeavouring to force an entrance. The Saint was much sur-

prised at this information, but he did not allow himself to be disturbed. He feared less the ruin of the city and the church than the outrages without number which these barbarians would inflict on the innocent people, and the sacrileges they would commit against holy things, especially the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar.

Full of confidence in God, he reverently opened the tabernacle, and, taking out the ciborium, he concealed it under his tunic near his heart ; then, turning towards the religious who were standing around him trembling with fear, he said to them : " Follow me, my brethren, and be not afraid."

But when he came near the door of the church he heard a loud voice which cried out : " Hyacinth, Hyacinth !" He stood and looked all around, but could see no one, so he turned to continue on his way. Immediately he heard the same voice again saying the same words. Once more he looked behind him, and, to his great astonishment and that of all those who accompanied him, he perceived that it proceeded from the statue of Our Lady, which was placed on an altar near the centre of the church. It was made of alabaster, and exceedingly heavy.

" My beloved Hyacinth," the voice added, " is it thus you are about to deliver my Son from the hands of the barbarians, and to leave His Mother to their impious insults ?"

As the Saint answered that it was impossible for him who was so weak to carry a burden which was so heavy, the voice replied : " If you had a little more faith and a little more love for me, it would be very easy for you to carry it."

" I desire nothing so much as to possess that love and confidence," replied St. Hyacinth. " See, I am ready to obey at once."

Saying these words, he approached the altar of Our Lady, and with loving respect, stretching out his arms, he placed the statue upon them, and carried it as easily as if it had been a little flower.

It was thus that he left the village, the image of Our Lady in his arms and the holy ciborium on his breast, accompanied by his brethren. He passed unmolested through the ranks of the enemy, who, by the permission of God, stood at a distance, and whose eyes were struck with blindness for a time so that they could not see them.

When they had passed out of the village, they directed their steps towards the city of Cracovia. Here another miracle occurred to console them on their journey. When they reached the banks of the river over which they had to pass, they could find no means of reaching the other side. But full of confidence in the power of the Most Holy Sacrament which he held in one hand, and in the protection of Mary, whose image he carried in the other, he made the sign of the Cross ; then, placing his feet on the surface of the waters, he reached the opposite bank without even moistening the soles of his sandals. The religious who were along with him, seeing repeated the miracle of St. Peter walking on the waters, followed him and also reached the other side of the river, the water not appearing even to touch them.

Another miracle still more marvellous is recorded in the process of the canonization of the Saint.

The river over which they thus miraculously passed for a considerable time afterwards continued to show the impression of the Saint's footsteps.

When St. Hyacinth reached Cracovia, he placed the ciborium on the high altar of the church, and the statue of Our Lady on one of the side altars. Many other wonderful things are recorded to have taken place there through the intercession of Our Lady, which caused many of the people to embrace the true Faith and strengthened and vivified the life of faith in the souls of those who already possessed it.

RIBADENEIRA, *August* 16.

X. MODESTY.

The tenth fruit of the Holy Ghost is Modesty. My child, if there is one virtue more than another that makes us resemble the angels of God in Heaven it is the virtue of holy modesty ; and if there is one virtue more than another that the Devil seeks to rob us of, it is that same virtue. O my child, try to learn, then, its value, that you may be willing to sacrifice everything you possess on earth rather than lose it.

THE SNOW-WHITE DOVES.

Cardinal Baronius relates that when a certain pious girl called Georgia was on the point of death a great multitude of snow-white doves were seen hovering about her. And when her body was brought to the church after her death, the doves flew to that part of the roof which was immediately above the corpse, and remained there till after the interment.

The people ran to the church to see this wonderful thing, and they were persuaded that God had sent His angels, under the appearance of doves, to honour one whom they all esteemed and reverenced on account of her angelic modesty.

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES'S ADVICE.

"My child," he says, "when the Devil tempts you to do something that offends the virtue of modesty, imitate the example of little children, who at the sight of some animal coming to hurt them always run to the arms of their parents, or at least cry on them to come and help them.

"Run in this way to the arms of Jesus, and ask Him to protect you, or call upon Mary, your heavenly Mother, not to let the Wicked One come near you; run to her in spirit, and hide yourself under her mantle, and you will be safe, for Satan cannot touch you there."

A child who loves this great virtue of modesty will keep a strict watch over his eyes, so that they may not see things which may tempt him to offend God.

ST. ALOYSIUS AND THE EMPRESS.

St. Aloysius, before entering the Society of Jesus, was sent by his father into Spain, where he spent about two years in the Court of the Empress as one of her pages.

Some years afterwards, when in Rome, one of his companions said to him: "When the Empress comes to Rome, you will be able to recognize her."

St. Aloysius replied: "If I were near her and

heard her speak, I might be able to know her by her voice, but I would not know her by her face, for I never saw it."

So great was the angelic modesty of this young Saint that, although he had been for two years constantly in attendance on the Empress, he had never raised his eyes to look at her face. Oh, what an example, my child, for many who allow their eyes to wander to objects that ought never to be seen !

ST. CLARE'S ANSWER.

St. Clare of Montefalco when speaking to anyone never looked up at them, but always kept her eyes modestly cast down upon the ground.

When she was asked why she always acted in this manner, she replied : " Of what use is it for one to look into the face of the person to whom he speaks, since it is the tongue that speaks and not the eyes ? If King David had only kept a watch upon his eyes when he was in the presence of others, he would not have had to shed so many bitter tears."

THE PICTURE OF A MODEST CHILD.

Father Mey, a holy priest in Germany, thus describes a modest child : " A child who is really modest," he says, " will rise in the morning with these words on his lips : ' God is here and sees me,' then he will be careful never to do anything which he knows would displease God. When he sees by chance something that he knows ought not to be seen, or hears words which he knows ought not to be said, he will turn away his eyes that he may not

look, and go away as soon as possible that he may not hear the words again.

" If he happens to be in the company of those who do wrong, and invite him to do it with them, he will run away as quickly as if he were pursued by a wolf, and seek for a place of safety that he may escape destruction.

" At night he will retire to rest in the presence of God, as he arose in the morning, and fall asleep with his arms modestly folded on his breast.

" Wherever he may be, he will always keep in mind that God is everywhere and sees all things, that His angel guardian is always at his side to watch over him ; and who is there who would ever dare to conduct himself in an unbecoming manner in the presence of God and His holy angels ?

" My children," continues the holy man, " let the virtue of Christian modesty be the guiding star of your life ; for children who are modest and pure shall be for ever in Heaven with God ; but those who are immodest and impure shall be for ever in Hell with Satan."

The most certain and the easiest means of preserving holy purity is to be devout to the Blessed Mother of God. If you pray to her for help in every temptation against that holy virtue, she most certainly will protect you.

XI. Constancy.

Constancy is the eleventh fruit of the Holy Ghost.

This virtue produces in our souls a firmness of mind, together with a resolution to accomplish faith-

fully to the end the duties of our state of life and of our holy Religion, without being deterred from doing so by the fear or the love of anything whatsoever.

ST. BARHAD'S ANSWER TO THE GOVERNOR.

When the Governor of Adiabene commanded St. Barhad to renounce his Faith under pain of death, he courageously refused to obey him.

Orders were then given that he should be placed upon the rack, and be subjected to the most cruel tortures. While enduring these things, the Governor continued to tempt him : " Adore the fire and the water," he cried out to the martyr, " partake of the blood of animals, and your liberty will be immediately granted to you."

The holy man, with the sweet serenity on his countenance which was habitual with him, and rejoicing at being permitted to suffer for God's sake, made answer : " Neither your commands, nor the sufferings to which you are subjecting me, will ever separate me from the love of my God and my Saviour Jesus Christ, Whom I have served from the days of my childhood till my present old age."

The Judge, seeing that he could not shake his constancy by promises or by threats, gave orders that he should be beheaded.

Grande Vies des Saints, xiv. 369.

My child, when we read of the constancy of the martyrs, we should be ashamed of our cowardice in the service of God, and should resolve to serve Him for the future with the greatest love and fidelity.

XII. Chastity.

Chastity is the crowning fruit of the Holy Ghost. It is that virtue which made Our Blessed Lady so dear to God, as also all those who have imitated her example.

At the same time it is the virtue Satan hates above all others, and it is against it that his assaults are chiefly directed. Oh, how diligently you should labour, my child, to keep it undefiled!

St. Odilo's Love for Holy Purity.

From the time of his miraculous cure in the Church of Our Lady, when as yet he was only a child, St. Odilo's devotion to the Mother of God daily increased. He chose her as his protectress, and never omitted an occasion of procuring for her all the honour in his power; and Our Lady, on her part, never seemed tired of bestowing on him favours and heavenly blessings.

The virtue he strove to cultivate with the greatest care was that of holy purity, for he knew that this was the one that made her most agreeable to God, and the one she cherished most of all. So great was the perfection he attained in the practice of this virtue that a certain brightness shone on his countenance, which inspired those who approached him with a feeling of reverence.

When he grew up he felt in his soul a great desire of consecrating his whole life to her service. He became a monk in the Monastery of Cluny, so dear to the Mother of God, and made so much progress

in virtue and learning that in the year 994, on the death of the holy Abbot, St. Mayeul, he was chosen to succeed him. *Life of St. Odilo*, January 1.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. AGNES.

The following is an account of the heroic death of this martyr of chastity, depicted by the great Cardinal Wiseman, culled from the ancient writings of St. Jerome and Prudentius, recorded in the works of Godescard:

Fulvius aspired to the hand of Agnes, the youthful virgin of Rome, but was repulsed by the spouse of Christ. "I am," she said to him, "espoused to One Who has already pledged me to Him by His betrothal ring and has adorned me with immense jewels. He has girded my hand and neck with precious gems, and has set in my ears rings of peerless pearls."

Fulvius thought on hearing these words that the young maiden had lost her reason, for her eyes were fixed on Heaven, where her Spouse dwelt. But he soon regained courage, and repeated his request in words still more urgent.

Agnes, now seeing what he desired, said to him in a voice it was impossible to misunderstand: "Begone from me, you food of death, because another Lover has already taken possession of my heart. To Him alone I pledge my faith, to Him alone do I with entire confidence entrust myself."

Fulvius, and the others who had tried to gain her heart, seeing that they had ignominiously failed, denounced her to the Judge as being a Christian. They hoped that the sight of the terrible tortures to

which she would be exposed would cause her to yield to their desires. But the young virgin stood unappalled in presence of her cruel accusers, and the Judge, still more unmerciful ; nothing disturbed the serenity of her countenance in this extremity of danger. Her one desire was to obtain the crown of martyrdom by which she would be for ever united to Him Whom alone she loved, and every instrument of torture displayed before her eyes only made her more joyful, for she saw in them the means of the sooner reaching her coveted happiness.

" Hark !" exclaimed Agnes, as she heard the noise of the footsteps of those who came to lead her to her crown ; " they come, they come ! Hear the measured tramp of the soldiers in the gallery ; they are the bridesmen coming to summon me. But I see on high the white-robed bridesmaids borne on the bright clouds of morning, and beckoning me forward. Yes, my lamp is trimmed, and I go forth to meet the Bridegroom."

Over the first part of the martyr's trials we cast a veil of silence, though ancient Fathers and the Church in her Offices dwell upon it as doubling her crown. Suffice it to say that her angel protected her from harm, and that the purity of her presence converted a den of infamy into a holy and lovely sanctuary.

It was early in the morning when she stood again before the tribunal of the Prefect in the Roman Forum, unchanged and unscathed, without a blush upon her shining countenance or a pang of sorrow in her innocent heart. Only her unshorn hair, the symbol of virginity, which had been let loose,

flowed down in golden waves upon her snow-white dress.

Agnes was introduced by her guards into the open space, and stood intrepid before the tribunal. Her thoughts seemed to be far away, and she took no notice of those who surrounded her.

"Why is she unfettered?" asked the Prefect angrily.

"She does not need it, she walks so readily," answered Catulus the executioner, "and she is so young."

"But she is obstinate as the oldest. Put manacles on her hands at once."

The executioner turned over a quantity of such prison ornaments—to Christian eyes really such—and at length selected a pair as light and small as he could find, and placed them around her wrists. Agnes playfully and with a smile shook her hands, and they fell, like St. Paul's viper, clattering at her feet.

"They are the smallest we have, sir," said the softened executioner. "One so young ought to wear other bracelets."

"Silence, man!" rejoined the exasperated Judge, who, turning to the prisoner, said in a blander tone: "Agnes, I pity thy youth, thy station, and the bad education thou hast received. I desire, if possible, to save thee. Think better whilst thou hast time. Renounce the false and pernicious maxims of Christianity, obey the Imperial edicts, and sacrifice to the gods."

"It is useless to tempt me longer," she replied. "My resolution is unalterable. I despise thy false

divinities, and can only love and serve the one living God. Eternal Ruler, open wide the heavenly gates until lately closed to man. Blessed Christ, call to Thee the soul that cleaveth unto Thee: victim first to Thee by virginal consecration, now to Thy Father by martyrdom's immolation."

"I waste time, I see," said the impatient Prefect, who saw symptoms of compassion rising in the multitude. "Secretary, write the sentence. We condemn Agnes, for contempt of the Imperial edicts, to be punished by the sword."

"On what road, and at what milestone, shall the judgment be executed?" asked the headsman.

"Let it be carried into effect at once," was the reply.

Agnes raised for one moment her hands and eyes to Heaven, then calmly knelt down. With her own hands she drew forward her silken hair over her head and exposed her neck to the blow. A pause ensued, for the executioner was trembling with emotion and could not wield his sword. As the child knelt alone in her white robe, with her head inclined, her arms modestly crossed upon her bosom, and her amber locks hanging almost to the ground and veiling her features, she might not inaptly have been compared to some rare plant, of which the slender stalk, white as the lily, bent with the luxuriancy of its golden blossom.

The Judge angrily reproved the executioner for his hesitation, and bade him at once do his duty. The man passed the back of his rough left hand across his eyes as he raised the sword. It was seen to flash for an instant in the air, and the next moment

flower and stalk were lying scarcely displaced on the ground. It might have been taken for the prostration of prayer had not the white robe been in that minute dyed into a rich crimson—washed in the blood of the Lamb.

St. Agnes was interred near Rome on the Nomentan Way. CARDINAL WISEMAN; GODESCARD.

LI

THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

I. To Feed the Hungry.

The first corporal work of mercy is to feed the hungry. Jesus Christ says that He will consider as given to Himself the food we give to those who are hungry, and He has promised the Kingdom of Heaven to those who do this for His sake. "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom which was prepared for you, because I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat."

THE WIDOW OF SAREPHTA.

St. Cyprian and St. Jerome place before us the example of the widow of Sarephta as a model of perfect charity towards our neighbour, because, although a heathen, she gave of what was even necessary for her own subsistence to help others who were in want.

This poor widow, as the Holy Scriptures relate to us, had been reduced to extreme poverty on account of the famine which at that time devastated the country in which she dwelt, when it happened that Elias the prophet came to her and asked of her something to eat and drink.

" And the word of the Lord came to him " (Elias), " saying : ' Arise and go to Sarephta of the Sidonians, and dwell there : for I have commanded a widow woman to feed thee.'

" He arose and went to Sarephta. And when he was come to the gate of the city, he saw the widow woman gathering sticks, and he called her, and said to her : ' Give me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.'

" And when she was going to fetch it, he called after her, saying : ' Bring me also, I beseech thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand.'

" And she answered : ' As the Lord thy God liveth, I have no bread, but only a handful of meal in a pot, and a little oil in a cruse : behold, I am gathering two sticks that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.'

" Elias said to her : ' Fear not, but go, and do as thou hast said : but first make for me of the same meal a little hearth-cake, and bring it to me : and after make for thyself and thy son. For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel : ' The pot of meal shall not waste, nor the cruse of oil be diminished, until the day wherein the Lord will give rain upon the face of the earth.'

" She went and did according to the word of Elias ; and he ate, and she, and her house : and from that day the pot of meal wasted not, and the cruse of oil was not diminished according to the word of the Lord which He spoke in the hand of Elias " (3 Kings xvii. 8 *et seq.*).

If God granted this widow so great a temporal

reward for her kindness to a stranger in distress, how much greater will be the eternal reward we may expect hereafter for our works of mercy, since Jesus Christ has so often declared that whatever we do to one of the least of His brethren He will consider it as done to Himself ! *Catéch. de Rodez.*, iii. 34.

THE CHARITY OF THE FATHER OF THE BLESSED CURÉ D'ARS.

" Blessed Jean Baptiste Vianney had been brought up in a very Christian atmosphere," writes a recent author of his Life, " and had learned to love charity by seeing it daily practised. Every evening at his father's house there was a constant succession of poor people, who came to beg a bowl of soup and a night's lodging on the straw of the barn.

" Sometimes there were as many as twelve or fifteen, some standing round the big fireplace, where a log was blazing, while others were seated on the threshold of the dwelling. Often it happened that the supply was too small for the number of guests, in which case the father of the family would deprive himself of his own portion to make an extra one for some one of them.

" On one occasion, before the birth of John Marie, St. Benoit Joseph Labre was among the beggars whom M. Vianney had invited to his table. The Saint no doubt prayed for a blessing on his host's hospitable house ; and perhaps it was in answer to his prayer that He Who had promised to reward even a cup of water offered in His name sent to the humble labourer who shared his supper every

night with the unfortunate that truly magnificent reward, a son, who was to practise in an heroic degree all the hereditary virtues of his family."

The Blessed John Vianney, p. 2.

"THE LITTLE FATHER OF THE POOR."

When St. Francis was a boy of only five years, his love for the poor of Jesus Christ was already very great. Nothing gave him so much joy as to distribute alms among them. He frequently deprived himself of half of his meals that he might give it to them ; and when he had nothing left of his own to give, he would go to his friends and neighbours and ask them for something for them, saying : "Give me something for the poor brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ."

At other times he would say : "Jesus is naked : give me something wherewith to clothe Him ; Jesus is hungry : give me some food for Him ; Jesus is sick, and has a bad bed to lie on : give me something to make Him comfortable."

This, his love for the poor, procured for him in his childhood the title of "The Little Father of the Poor."

Life of St. Francis of Sales.

HOW THE BOY ST. VINCENT LOVED GOD'S POOR.

In his boyhood St. Vincent of Paul had a great love for the poor. One day his father sent him to the mill for some flour. On the way home he happened to meet some poor people, and as he had nothing of his own to give them, he opened the sack he was carrying, and gave them some handfuls of the flour.

When he reached home his father saw that he had not the full quantity, and he asked him what he had done with the rest.

Vincent, who would rather die than tell an untruth, at once related what had happened. His father did not punish him ; on the contrary, from his heart he gave thanks to God for having given him a son who loved the poor so much.

Another time, when he was about twelve years old, he was sent to do some work, and when the work was done he got about fifteen pence as his wages. It was his first earnings, and he felt not a little proud as he held in his hands a few pieces of money which were really his own.

His first thought was about what he would do with them. " I will take them home," he said to himself, " and lay them aside carefully."

On the way home he met a poor man, and when he saw the state of misery in which he was, he at once gave him the whole sum without keeping as much as one penny for himself.

" YOU DID IT UNTO ME."

One day St. John of God saw lying on the wayside a poor man whose face plainly testified to the painful agony he was enduring.

Full of compassion, St. John raised him in his arms and took him to his own house and affectionately bestowed on him every care his condition required. While he was washing his feet, he saw with astonishment that they were pierced, as if large nails had been driven through them. He rose up from his knees in great agitation and looked upon

the face of the stranger. From the serene majesty of His noble figure he immediately recognized Jesus Christ Himself.

As he was gazing on Him with rapture and love, he heard a sweet voice saying to him : " John, My faithful servant, I have thus appeared to you in order that you may know how much I love your humility and the care you take of My poor. Every time you open your mouth to speak words of consolation to them, or move your hand to help them, or even think of them, I am grateful to you. Persevere, then, in this noble work, and you shall be happy."

On returning to his senses after this vision the Saint stretched forth his hand to embrace the feet of his adorable Saviour ; but Jesus had disappeared.

La Charité enseignée aux Enfants, p. 11.

HOW ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND LOVED THE POOR.

The brightest jewel in the diadem of St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland, was her intense love for the poor.

Whenever she went out of her palace, she was surrounded by multitudes of widows, orphans, and poor people, who called her by the tender name of mother. She loved to see them around her, and called them her children, and never sent any of them away without giving them what they asked.

The hall of the castle was always filled with the poor. The happy smile upon the Queen's countenance when she entered showed them that they were welcome. She would humbly kneel before them

and wash their feet, then with her own hands would serve them. She never sat down to table without having first fed and waited upon nine little orphans and twenty grown-up poor.

When the two little Princesses, her daughters, were of age to help her, she always took them with her, and endeavoured in this way to enkindle in their hearts that charity which burned in her own. And when they grew up, history tells us that they were faithful imitators of their pious mother.

Often during Lent and Advent she would invite as many as three hundred poor. They were arranged at two tables—the men at the one, and the women at the other, and the same food was placed before them as was prepared for the royal table. Then the King would humbly serve the men, and she the women, in imitation of their Divine Master, Who came into this world not to be ministered to, but to minister to others.

II. To Give Drink to the Thirsty.

The second corporal work of mercy is to give drink to the thirsty. "I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink: Amen I say to you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of My brethren, you did it to Me."

THE CUP OF COLD WATER.

When Jesus Christ sent out the twelve Apostles to prepare the people for His coming amongst them, He gave them various counsels and admonitions, which He ended with these beautiful words:

"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive the reward of a prophet; and he that receiveth a just man in the name of a just man shall receive the reward of a just man. And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." *St. Matt.* x. 41, 42.

III. To Clothe the Naked.

The third corporal work of mercy is to clothe the naked. Here again Our Lord has made us a promise that if we do this good work to His poor ones He will consider it as done to Himself, and will reward it accordingly. "I was naked, and you clothed Me. The poor you have always with you, but Me you have not always."

THE CHILD ST. GILES AND THE INFIRM MAN.

When St. Giles was as yet only a little child, God infused into his heart a tender compassion for the needy and the poor.

One day, as he was going into the church of his native town, he saw a poor man sitting on the ground near the door of the church, who seemed to be in great suffering and poverty, and who was asking an alms from those who were passing in.

The little boy Giles, on seeing him, being moved with compassion, and having no money to give him, took off his cloak and offered it to him. The poor man took the cloak, but no sooner had his hands touched it than his infirmity entirely dis-

appeared. He at the same moment rose up, and, full of joy at what had happened to him, he gave thanks to God and to His youthful servant.

RIBADENEIRA, ix. 1.

HOW ST. GILES LOVED THE POOR.

We read in the Life of the same St. Giles that afterwards, when he had grown up to manhood, and had entered the service of King Clotaire III. of France, the monarch sometimes gave him his own clothing as a mark of his special favour; but no sooner did he receive them than he sold them, and obtained money for them, all of which he gave in alms to the poor.

His affection for God's poor knew no bounds. If a stranger coming into the place asked the passers-by where he dwelt, they would answer him: "Go into such and such a street, and you will see a number of poor people assembled in one place; it is there where he dwells." A great multitude of poor people always followed him wherever he went; and he distributed to them, or caused his servants to distribute to them, food and money. Every day he took some of them into his own house, and with his own hands gave them the food which had been prepared for himself, he himself eating what they had left. He also gave them wine to drink, although he never used any himself. *Grande Vies des Saints*, xxiii. 3.

ST. RUPERT AND THE POOR BOY.

St. Rupert was the son of one of the great lords who formed the Court of Louis le Débonnaire, King of France.

Although born in this exalted position of life, God inspired him from his childhood with a contempt for all earthly things, and filled his heart with the desire of heaping up those riches for Heaven which can never perish. Above all the other virtues for which he was conspicuous, charity towards the poor was the one he loved to practise. We read of him that he frequently would lead the little children of the poor whom he met to the castle, and, going to his mother, would say to her, while shedding tears of great compassion : " My good mother, here are some more of your children ; look on them as such for the sake of Our Divine Lord Jesus, Who said : ' Whatever you do to one of the least of My brethren, you do it unto Me.'

" My dearest mother," he would continue, " permit your little Rupert to share his food with the poor, that he may obey Jesus Christ." The Duchess, his mother, when she heard him saying these words, would press her little boy to her heart and give thanks to God.

One day he met a poor little boy on the wayside, weeping and trembling with cold. He, without hesitating an instant, took off his upper garments and covered the child with them.

Not long afterwards he fell asleep on the side of a hill, and during his sleep he beheld a beautiful vision.

He saw a multitude of angels clad in white, and having golden wings, going and coming near the place where he lay. High above them, seated on a throne of brilliant light, was the Divine Child Jesus, along with St. John. Two angels went

towards Him, bearing garments in their hands. They were the garments Rupert had given to the little boy on the road. When the angels drew near, Jesus permitted them to put on Him the garments they had brought.

And as the other angels were looking on in silence and in wonder, Jesus said to them : " It was the little Rupert who gave Me these garments. In return for his charity to Me I am going to take him up to Heaven, and clothe him with the robes of glory and immortality, and he will shine among My Saints for ever."

La Charité enseignée aux Enfants, p. 10.

My child, Rupert is now among the Saints of God in Heaven. Such also will be the reward He will give to you if you do good to others for His sake according to your means.

IV. To Harbour the Harbourless.

To harbour the harbourless is the fourth corporal work of mercy. This means that, as there are many of our poorer brethren who have no place whereon to lay their heads or rest their weary limbs, we should, when it is in our power, prudently enable them to procure a place of shelter. " I was a stranger, and you took Me in."

St. Vincent of Paul and the Forsaken Children.

At the time when St. Vincent lived there existed in France a cruel custom, which seems to us almost incredible. Every year in the streets of Paris alone

from three to four hundred newly-born infants were left to perish. Their unnatural mothers, who might already have had a number of little ones to support, would do this to get rid of them.

St. Vincent was grieved beyond measure at the sad fate of these helpless little ones.

"With God's assistance," he said, "I will be a father to them, since their own parents have cast them out."

Then he assembled together a number of ladies full of zeal and charity like himself, and with their help he succeeded in rescuing an immense multitude of these children. A house was procured for the purpose of being a home to them, and these good ladies took care of them and brought them up.

Every year their number increased, and soon became too numerous for the money they had in hand for their support. But Providence seemed visibly to help those who were thus labouring for His little ones; and as the children they collected into their home of charity increased in number, so likewise did their resources increase in proportion.

St. Vincent was the heart and soul of this good work. Often was he to be seen in the winter-time going about during the night when snow and ice covered the streets, looking for these poor castaways. And when he found any he would take them in his arms, and try to warm them by putting them under his cloak, and keeping them close to his bosom. Then he would carry them to his good ladies, the Sisters of Charity, who would take care of them.

On one occasion, about midnight, he was going along the streets looking as usual for poor infants.

That night he had found three. As he was proceeding homeward in the dark with his burden under his cloak, a number of armed robbers came upon him and ordered him to stop.

"Your money or your life!" cried out one of them, brandishing a dagger before the holy man's face.

"Alas!" said the Saint calmly, "I have nothing that I can give you; I have here three little infants whom I found in the street; they are dying of want and hunger, and I am bringing them home to take care of them."

"Ah, I know who you are, then," said the robber. "You must be the holy man Vincent." Then all the robbers went down on their knees and asked him for his blessing. When they received it, they rose up and escorted him to his house, so that no one might dare to interfere with him or molest him.

THE SAINT'S GRATITUDE: A LEGEND OF ARTOIS.

In the latter part of the twelfth century there lived in the small town of St. Pol, in Artois, a poor widow who feared God and reverenced His Saints. Her only joy in life was her infant son, and she had nothing to depend upon for their common support but the labour of her hands and the charity of pious souls; but she placed all her confidence in Him Who has bid us not to be solicitous for the morrow, and look to Him for our daily bread.

One evening a poor friar who had lost his way knocked at the door of her humble abode, and begged a little food and a night's shelter. Like the widow of Sarephta, she never refused to give out of her

deep poverty to those who were in need, and she willingly accorded to the stranger the hospitality he craved. He gave only the name of "Christian," but the words that fell from his lips had in them a wonderful mixture of sweetness and command. In the morning, as he was about to take his departure, he said, in the words of St. Peter to the lame man sitting at the gate of the Temple, "Silver and gold have I none; but what I have I give thee," and raising his hand, he bestowed his benediction on the good widow and the child she bore in her arms, with an air of so much majesty that she felt as if his blessing had something of supernatural virtue in it. And in fact this poor unknown friar, clad in a habit of coarsest serge, to whom she had given a night's lodging, was no other than the great St. Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of England, who, like his Divine Master, was suffering persecution for justice' sake. Compelled to fly his country in disguise to avoid the tyrannic violence of Henry II., he was on his way to seek an asylum at the Court of Louis, King of France. The presence of such a man in her humble cabin left behind it a perfume of edification in the heart of the pious widow, the effect of which was increased tenfold when she became aware who it was whom she had entertained unawares. Nor was it long ere the tidings with which all Christendom rang reached her lonely cottage, that the crime of a worthless monarch had obtained for the venerable Prelate the crown of martyrdom; and as every day in her prayers she testified her belief in the communion of Saints, and that death has no power to break the ties by which

Christians are bound together in this life, she never ceased to have a lively faith in the protection of her saintly guest. Devout as she was before, she now redoubled her fervour, and took all diligent pains to bring up her child from his earliest years in obedience to the commandments of God and of His Church.

The year of Our Lord 1173 was a year of dearth and famine ; a rigorous winter had now come to add its own peculiar sufferings to the privations of the time, and the general need closed hands and hearts against the poor.

The widow sought for work or alms in vain ; she had exhausted her last means for her child's support, having stripped herself of her clothes and deprived herself of food to obtain some scanty sustenance for him ; but soon her strength gave way in the extremity of her distress, her energies of mind and body alike failed her. She fell sick, and from the wretched pallet where she lay helplessly extended, she had the agony of hearing her child saying continually by her side : " Oh, mother, I am so cold and hungry ; I want some bread."

" Bread, my poor child ? It is all gone, and I cannot go and seek for any ; but the Lord never forsakes those who serve Him in sincerity of heart. Pray to Him ; then go out into the highway, and beg of the rich as they pass by ; hold out your hands and say : ' Give me something, for the love of God.' They will be sure to give to you, for your voice is sweet and gentle—not like mine."

The anxious mother thought that the penny which would be denied to her poverty and impor-

tunity would be granted to her child's plaintive accents and tender years.

The little boy went out as his mother had bidden him ; but, spared as he had hitherto been by the exertions of his mother in the past from the necessity of imploring the compassion of strangers, he was ashamed to beg. Far from trying to attract the attention of the passers-by, he hardly liked even to let them see his misery, and went wandering about murmuring mechanically a few broken words which no one could hear, so that several went on their way without so much as even observing him.

At last he reached the porch of the great church. An old priest was just coming out, and encouraged by his mild and benevolent countenance the child was on the point of approaching him and imploring his charity. But the priest was hastening to a dying man ; he walked quickly on, and did not perceive the little boy following him.

While endeavouring to overtake him, he met a cavalier, covered with velvet and ermine, mounted on a beautiful palfrey, with a damsel, richly attired, seated behind him. They were on their way to a banquet given by the Sire de Bryas, and doubtless would have gladly thrown a handful of coin to the young petitioner to begin the pleasures of the day by a work of charity. But the howling of the wind and the noise of the horse's hoofs drowned the tremulous voice which ventured to accost them, and they also left behind them the poor little beggar boy to his sorrow and his hunger.

Thus abandoned by all, his eyes red and swollen with the tears which he had striven in vain to repress,

he suddenly remembered that his mother had often made him pray to God to bless the noble lady, the Countess of St. Pol, and how he had heard people say that she was gracious and gentle to all her vassals, high and low, and kindest to those to whom God had given the smallest share of this world's goods. At this cheering thought his strength and courage revived, and he ascended the steep path that led to the castle ; but on arriving, he found, to his dismay, that the drawbridge was up, and on the other side he could see a man-at-arms standing, whose stern aspect and martial appearance frightened him. He stopped, however, and from time to time cast supplicating glances towards him, in the hopes of moving him to pity ; but the man took no notice of him, and the child felt his last hope die in his heart. To shelter himself from the piercing blast, he crept into the thicket which skirted the side of the moat, and went and sat behind a pile of faggots newly raised by the woodmen. There he remained sobbing and crying ; but after a little while a benumbing chill seized on his little limbs; he fell into a drowsy stupor ; the pitiless cold completed what want and misery and fatigue had begun. Soon he ceased to cry, he ceased to suffer—he was dead.

Meanwhile the mother, left all alone, had counted the long dreary hours as they went by, looking in vain for her darling's return. Every time the wind shook the door she thought it was her boy coming in, and with difficulty raised herself up in her bed to catch a sight of him ; but the wind was quiet again, everything was still, and she sank back exhausted with pain and anxiety. More than once,

in spite of her illness and weakness, she dragged herself to the door of the cabin to listen in the distance and call him by name ; but there came no reply to relieve and gladden her heart. At last, no longer able to control her fears, and love lending strength to her enfeebled frame, she left the house, and went out into the highway ; and now she, in her turn, wandered about the neighbourhood, asking everyone she met, not for bread, but for her child. Her distress touched the hearts of those she accosted, but no one could tell her what had become of him, he had passed along so quickly and unnoticed. In an agony of tears, and, like Rachel, refusing to be comforted, she wandered thus the whole day long, and all night too, without finding any traces of him whom she was seeking. At last, on the third day, she went into the Chapel of Tourelles, and throwing herself on her knees before the image of Our Lady of Dolours, she implored her by her three days' sorrowing at the loss of Jesus and her joy at finding Him in the Temple, to give her back her child, dead or alive. The tender heart of Mary had compassion on her, and the unhappy mother, as though guided by an invisible hand, went straight to the place where her child was lying. Her eye had no sooner lighted upon him than she rushed forward, cast herself on the ground, and clasped him to her breast amidst a shower of tears and kisses ; but when she found him hang motionless in her arms, and felt his stiff and icy cheeks against her own, she fell fainting by his side.

But God, Who has pity on a mother's sorrow and Who once raised to life again the only son of the widow of Naim, willed to show forth His mercy in

this poor mother, and to glorify through her one of His great Saints. Her first thought, as she came to herself, was of that holy pastor who had shed his blood for the Church of Christ, and now, without rising from her knees, she thus piteously besought his aid: "O holy martyr!" she cried, "my child is dead—the child whom once you blessed when he lay an infant on my bosom. Have you forgotten the honour you then did me in visiting my humble dwelling, and will you not assist us in our present need? For myself, I know that my sins have rendered me unworthy of your notice; but this poor child, as yet so innocent, have pity on him!"

The gates of Heaven opened at the widow's prayer, and from his throne in glory the Saint completed those words of the Apostle which years before he had begun to utter: "In the Name of Jesus rise up and walk." The boy instantly revived, and with life to her child, joy once again returned to the mother's heart. *The Chimes.*

"GO AND BRING THE LITTLE ONES TO OUR HOME."

In the province of Moselle, in France, it happened that a poor man, who had lived by the labour of his hands, fell ill and died. His widow, who, like himself, had served God humbly in their poverty, did not lose courage nor confidence in God. She had, it is true, sold everything that belonged to her except a wooden crucifix to procure food for herself and her two little ones, but still she did not forget the promise of Our Heavenly Father that if we seek in the first place the Kingdom of God, He will never forsake us in our temporal wants.

But God has His own way in dealing with His elect, and sometimes when He seems to abandon them altogether, it is at that very moment that He is providing for their needs. The woman became ill, and suddenly died. A short time afterwards a neighbour, not having seen her as usual attending to her work, and observing that the door remained shut, thought that there was something amiss. She therefore entered the house, and found her lying on a wretched bed, dead. In a cradle near her were her two little children sleeping and smiling, ignorant of the misfortune which had befallen them.

The woman, who was also very pious, knelt for a few minutes at the bedside to say some prayers for the departed soul ; then, rising up, she closed her eyes and reverently placed over the remains a white covering.

At the same moment the children awoke, and after attending to their wants, she placed them again in the cradle, where they once more fell asleep. Her motherly eyes were filled with tears as she gazed upon the two helpless little ones before her, and consulting only the impulse of her generous heart, she said to herself : " I will take home with me these two innocent children. I will be a mother to them, and God will do the rest."

Confidence in God's providence was the only fortune this good woman possessed. Her husband, who was an ordinary daily labourer, gained only sufficient to support his wife and his own three children, and during the months of winter he was frequently in distress because he could not obtain employment.

On the evening of the day of the event just recorded, on his return home, he found his wife in a state of great agitation, for she was afraid he might be angry with her when he discovered what she had done.

" My dear wife," he said, " why are you so downcast and sad ? Has any accident taken place to grieve you during my absence ?"

" No, my dear husband," she answered. " If I am sad, it is because of a great misfortune which has occurred to another."

" What misfortune ?" he asked.

" Our nearest neighbour died last night."

" That is rather a blessing for her than a misfortune," he replied. " She had much to endure in life on account of her poverty, but now all that is past and gone, and, being a pious woman, she will find rest with God. As for her children, they will now be better provided for, since they must be taken care of by the public authorities, and will find in the house of shelter to which they will be taken a better home than they have hitherto had."

" The house of shelter !" exclaimed his wife. " Yes, they will there indeed be provided for, but they will not find there a mother's heart to love them."

" Ah, that is indeed true," rejoined her husband, " especially if all mothers were like you, my own dearest Mary !"

These words gave her now greater confidence to tell him what she had done. She smiled sweetly, and said : " We have ever until now been able to provide our three little ones with sufficient food,

have we not ? Do you not think that with a little management we would be able to support two more ? God will provide for us. He has never yet allowed dire want to enter our home. Let us adopt these two orphans, and love them as our own children."

" What are you thinking about ? What do you propose to do ? Speak out, my dear wife, and tell me."

" But perhaps you will not agree to my wish to adopt them as our own ?"

" What do you say ?" he replied. " Not consent ? Most certainly I do, Mary. Go immediately and bring the little ones to our home."

" Oh, I have not far to go !" she answered, as she drew aside the curtains of the little bed where they lay asleep. " See, they are here already."

She then took the two little children, kissed them tenderly, and placed them in the arms of her husband, who also lovingly embraced them as he said : " Well, this has been a good day's work ! This morning, when we arose, we had only three children, now we have five to love, to bring up for God, and make good members of society. May God be for ever blessed !"

These noble people fulfilled the promises contained in these last words. These five children, as they grew up, were worthy of them. But how could it be otherwise ? for they lived in an atmosphere of innocence, and the seed sown in infancy in due time produced an abundant harvest. As the parents are, so also shall their children be.

Catéch. en Exemp., No. 758.

V. To Visit the Sick.

To visit the sick is the fifth corporal work of mercy.

My child, there is no consolation so great or so welcome to a sick person as the visit of a sympathizing friend. It makes him for a little time forget his pains, his sorrows, and the weariness of his sick-bed. Jesus Christ considers as made to Himself the visit one makes to those who are sick. "I was sick, and you visited Me," He says.

THE CHARITY OF A GREAT BISHOP.

Bishop de Cheverus, who afterwards became Archbishop of Bordeaux, in France, was, in the younger years of his ministry, obliged to leave his native country on account of the persecutions stirred up against the Church by the enemies of the Faith at the end of the eighteenth century. He found refuge in America, where he laboured with edifying zeal in propagating the Catholic religion in the United States.

His learning, his eloquence, and especially his admirable charity, attracted towards him the esteem, not only of his co-religionists, but even of those who adhered to other creeds.

In the year 1810 his zeal and devotion to the works of his ministry caused him to be appointed, notwithstanding his reluctance, to the bishopric of Boston. This new dignity did not in the slightest degree diminish his fervour in his works of charity towards God's poor, but only served to give him

greater opportunities of assisting them and exercising charity towards them.

There dwelt not far from the city of Boston a poor negro, who was very infirm, and without means of support of any kind. He lay on a miserable bed in a little cabin by the wayside ; but few of the passers-by ever went in to assist him, and he was frequently in the greatest danger of dying of hunger.

The pious Bishop soon came to the knowledge of his condition ; and for him to discover a case of misfortune similar to this and to come to the assistance of the sufferer was one and the same thing.

He therefore resolved to become the nurse of the unfortunate man. Every evening after darkness had set in he secretly went to the cabin, washed and dressed the poor man's sores, arranged his bed, and provided what food he might require until he returned. His great desire was that no one might come to know what he was doing but God alone.

But it was God's Will to glorify His servant. His housekeeper having observed that every morning his garments were covered with dust, or mud-stained, became very anxious to know where he had been and what was the cause of this unwonted circumstance. One night she secretly followed him, and saw him enter the poor man's cabin. When the door had been closed she approached nearer, and was able to see through the crevices what was passing within. What, then, was her amazement to see the Bishop in the first place light a fire which soon gave warmth to the wretched apartment, then

carry the infirm man in his arms to a seat by the hearth, wash his wounds, give him some food which he had cooked, make his bed so as to give him as much comfort as its poverty permitted, carry him back to it, and cover him with the tender care of an affectionate mother, embrace him, and wish him "Good-night," promising to return soon again!

From his Life.

ST. ELIZABETH AND THE LEPER.

In the Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary we read the following beautiful example:

"The Landgrave" (the husband of St. Elizabeth) "having gone to spend some days in his castle of Naumbourg, Elizabeth remained at Wartbourg, and employed herself during his absence in redoubling her zeal and care for the sick, notwithstanding the discontent testified by the Duchess-mother Sophia.

"Among the sick there was a poor little leper named Helias, whose condition was so deplorable that no one would take charge of him.

"Elizabeth, seeing him thus abandoned by all, felt herself bound to do more for him than for any other. She took and bathed him herself, anointed him with a healing balm, and then laid him in the bed, even that which she shared with her royal husband.

"Now, it happened that the Duke returned to the castle while Elizabeth was thus occupied. His mother ran out immediately to meet him, and when he alighted she said: 'Come with me, my son, and I will show thee a pretty doing of thy Elizabeth.'

"'What does this mean?' said the Duke.

" ' Only come, and thou wilt see,' she said, ' one she loves better than thee.'

" Then, taking him by the hand, she led him to his chamber and to his bed, and said to him : ' Now look, dear son ; thy wife puts lepers in thy bed, without my being able to prevent her. She wishes to give thee the leprosy : thou seest it thyself.'

" On hearing these words, the Duke could not repress a certain degree of irritation, and he quickly raised the coverings of his bed ; but at the same moment, according to the beautiful expression of the historian, ' the Most High unsealed the eyes of his soul, and in place of the leper he saw the figure of Jesus Christ crucified extended on the bed.'

" At this sight he remained motionless, as did his mother, and began to shed abundant tears, without being able at first to utter a word. Then, turning round, he saw his wife, who had gently followed, in order to calm his wrath against the leper. ' Elizabeth,' said he, ' my good sister, I pray thee often to give my bed to such guests. I shall always thank thee for this, and be not hindered by anyone in the exercise of thy virtues.'

" Then he knelt down and prayed thus to God : ' Lord, have mercy on me, a poor sinner ; I am not worthy to see all these wonders. I acknowledge Thy almighty power ; aid me, I pray Thee, to become a man according to Thy own heart and according to Thy Divine Will.'

" Elizabeth profited of the profound impression that this scene made upon the Duke to obtain his permission to erect an almshouse, wherein she

maintained twenty-eight sick or infirm poor persons, whom she went to visit every day, carrying with her meat and drink for their use."

MONTALEMBERT: *Life of St. Eliz.*, p. 61.

VI. To Visit the Imprisoned.

To visit the imprisoned and the captives is the sixth Corporal Work of Mercy.

Although it may be impossible for you, my child, to visit those who are in prison or in captivity, it may frequently be in your power to help them by your alms, and in various other ways, and you can always help them by your prayers for them. This is another act of virtue to which an exceedingly great reward is promised by Our Divine Lord, Who said: "I was in prison, and you visited Me."

ST. VINCENT OF PAUL AND THE GALLEY-SLAVE.

St. Vincent had all his lifetime a great compassion for those who were in distress, but the poor criminals condemned to the galleys were the objects of his special affection.

One day he was in Marseilles. No one there knew him, and none of his friends were aware that he had gone there. It was to that city that the poor galley-slaves were sent to fill up the time of their punishment.

Vincent went to the galleys, and was a witness of the miserable condition of these poor men in regard both to soul and body.

There was one man who attracted his attention more than the others; he was in a kind of mad

despair. Vincent went up to him and spoke to him a few kind words. "Tell me, my good man," he said, "what is it that makes you so sad?"

The man replied: "I have a wife and a little family who live far, far away from this place. I hear that they are suffering and in great misery because there is no one to work for them. It is now many years since I have seen them, and my heart yearns to speak to them again, and to embrace once more my darling little ones; but whilst I am here I can never enjoy that happiness, and the thought of this tortures me night and day."

These words touched the tender heart of Vincent: he tried to console the wretched man, and began to consider if it were possible by some means or other to restore him to his family; but none of the plans he thought of seemed likely to succeed.

At last a happy thought seemed to enter his mind, for he suddenly turned away from the man's side, and went in haste to the overseer.

"Do you see that man there? He would wish above all things else in this world to see once more his wife and children: will you allow me to take his place till he returns?"

The overseer, who did not know who Vincent was, expressed his surprise at such an unusual request, but at once granted it.

The Saint returned in great joy to the poor man, and told him that he had obtained permission for him to go and visit his friends, and that he himself would put on his chains, and take his place on the galleys till he came back. "Come back again in a month," added the Saint.

The poor man could hardly believe his senses. He would have fallen at the feet of his benefactor, so great was his joy and gratitude, but Vincent would not permit him. He willingly gave the promise to return in a month, and kept it.

But long before the month was ended, Vincent was discovered, and freed from his voluntary punishment. For when it became known that some generous person had taken the place of a galley-slave, people said that it must be Vincent. He was soon recognized, and the story of this great act of charity gained for him still more esteem.

ST. RAYMOND REDEEMS THE CAPTIVES.

One of the most illustrious Saints of the Order of Mercy for the redemption of captives was St. Raymond Nonnatus.

His Superiors chose him to go to Africa, to pursue in the midst of the barbarians of that country the pious purposes for which the Order had been divinely instituted. This mission filled him with great joy.

On reaching Africa he took up his abode in Algeria—a place to which the pirate ships conveyed the Christian prisoners whom they had captured on the high seas, and where they were exposed and sold as slaves in the market-places, or awaited the ransom demanded for their deliverance.

The number of these captives was so great at the time of the Saint's arrival that he had not sufficient money to redeem them all. But as his charity for these unfortunate people embraced them all without exception, he resolved to deliver them all from

their terrible bondage. To accomplish this, having purchased as many as his limited resources permitted, and having agreed concerning the amount of ransom demanded for the rest, he procured their liberation, offering himself as a hostage till such time as the money required would be sent.

The Saint was then loaded with chains ; but he thanked God from his inmost heart for having given him this opportunity of suffering something for the love of Him Who had died on the Cross to redeem the whole world.

It would be impossible to describe the cruelty of these barbarians towards him, or the sufferings they caused him to endure during the time of his captivity. They were so great that the Cadi or Judge of the place, fearing that he would die under them, and that thus he would forfeit the money he hoped to receive, gave command by sound of trumpet to all concerned that the hostage was not to be further molested, and that if he should die on account of the treatment he received at their hands, he would hold them responsible for his death, and that they themselves would have to pay the ransom agreed upon for his deliverance.

Raymond availed himself of this opportunity to perform heroic works of charity among the Christian captives who arrived day after day, and were subjected to the most unheard-of cruelty. He would visit them in their dungeons and console them, and encourage and confirm them in their faith. He extended his charity even to the infidels, instructing them when opportunity offered in the truths of the Catholic Religion. Many, even amongst the most

obstinate, embraced Christianity, and among them two Moors of high rank, who received the Sacrament of Baptism at his hands.

These good works of St. Raymond could not long remain concealed. The Pasha, named Setim, was informed of them, and, being filled with anger, ordered him to be cruelly beaten with rods.

This sentence was carried out with excessive severity, but it was far from restraining the zeal of the holy apostle. He continued to instruct those who manifested any desire to learn the truths of the Christian Faith, and to console and strengthen in their torments those among the Christians whom he perceived to waver in their resolution, or whom the hardship of their condition placed in the danger of renouncing their Faith.

When the Pasha heard of this further despising of his commands, he ordered him to be scourged in all the streets of the city ; then he pierced his lips with a hot iron rod, and joined them together with a padlock, the key of which was entrusted to the care of the Cadi, who only allowed it to leave his hands when it was necessary to give his prisoner food. He also ordered him to be thrown into one of the deepest dungeons and loaded with chains.

In this sad condition the holy man could not open his mouth to publish the praises of God, but it did not hinder him from opening his heart to speak to Him the language of love by prayers, desires, and holy thoughts. One day as his mind was occupied in pious contemplation, he fell into an ecstasy. His gaolers coming to give him some food, found him in this state prostrate on the ground, his head being

supported by his right hand, while the fingers of the left were lying on a book open at his side, and were touching the following verse of Psalm cviii. : " O Lord my God, take not the word of truth from my mouth." Seeing this, they were astonished, but this astonishment became greater when they heard him utter, with his lips still closed, another verse of the Psalmist : " Thy word, O God, endureth for ever."

The Moors attributed this to enchantment, and to make him cease speaking they beat him with rods and struck him with their feet, then left him with his lips still fastened, without giving him anything to eat.

St. Raymond lived for eight months in the midst of this cruel treatment, which he bore with unparalleled constancy. At the end of that time the religious of his Order arrived with the money that had been fixed upon for his release. The Cadi, who was a man of great avarice, was not satisfied with the amount they had brought, and desired still to retain him. The man of God himself, inflamed with charity for his neighbour, would willingly have remained to console his dear captives in their afflictions, but his brethren succeeded in obtaining his release, and he returned with them.

Petits Boll., August 31.

A BEAUTIFUL LEGEND OF ST. PETER PASCHAL.

St. Peter Paschal was born at Valencia, in Spain, in the thirteenth century. When he grew up in years he embraced the ecclesiastical state, which he adorned by his many virtues. His learning and

his piety pointed him out as a worthy successor to the Bishop of Jaën, who had a short time previously been called to receive the reward of his labours ; and from the first moment of his promotion to that see he became renowned for his zeal in the redemption of the Christian slaves who were captured by the Moors, and for the conversion of the infidels. So powerful were his words that many of the Mussulmans renounced their errors to embrace the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

The followers of Mahomet were filled with anger when they heard of these things, and while the Bishop was on a visit to Grenada they seized him and cast him into prison. The faithful of Jaën, learning that their beloved pastor had been reduced to slavery by these wicked men, collected a considerable sum of money and sent it to the Bishop, that he might thus procure his deliverance. The Saint received their gift with gratitude, but instead of spending it for his own ransom he employed it to procure the freedom of many women and children, whose weakness gave him cause to fear that they might not remain steadfast in the profession of their Religion.

St. Peter continued, therefore, to be a prisoner, and was treated with great cruelty by the infidels because of their hatred for the Christian name. One privilege they, strange to say, granted him—that of offering up daily the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

One morning during his long imprisonment, when he had made his preparation for saying Mass, during which he had used the discipline to mortify

himself in order to obtain from God strength and perseverance for his poor Christian slaves who were so inhumanly treated, he was disappointed at finding no one present to serve it. He went towards the door which led into the prison, to see if there was anyone near who could come to assist him.

At that moment Jesus Christ Himself appeared to him under the appearance of a little boy of four or five years of age, clad in the poor garments of a slave, and asked him of what he was in search.

" My dear child," replied the Saint, " I am looking for someone who may be able to serve Mass."

" I will gladly do that, my Father, if you will only accept of me."

The Saint, who had never before seen the child, asked him who he was.

" I will tell you who I am when you have finished Mass."

St. Peter Paschal then offered up the Holy Sacrifice with a feeling of great devotion, such as he had never before experienced ; and when he had finished his prayers of thanksgiving he asked the little boy several questions concerning the truths of our holy Faith, to all of which the child gave answers so full of wisdom that the holy man gazed upon him in wonder. Finally he put to him this question : " Tell me, my child, who is Jesus Christ ?"

The little boy answered : " I am Jesus Christ ; it is I Who was crucified for your salvation, and for that of the whole world ; look at My hands, and My feet, and My side, and you will recognize the wounds

I received during My Passion. Because you have of your own choice remained prisoner, in order that you might procure the freedom of my captive children, and because, to obtain their freedom, you spent the money sent to you to procure your own, you have made Me your prisoner." Having said these words, the little boy suddenly disappeared, leaving the Saint filled with exceeding great joy.

The Mahometans, revering the sanctity of their prisoner, resolved to grant him his liberty if only he would promise never to write or to say anything against the law of Mahomet. The Saint, desiring to obey God rather than man, refused to agree to this, and continued, as he had always done, to write and to preach against it. The Moors became exceedingly angry, and beheaded him as he knelt at the altar making his thanksgiving after Mass. This took place on the sixth day of January in the year 1300. *Vies des Saints, Petits Boll.*, xii. 559.

VII. To Bury the Dead.

The seventh Corporal Work of Mercy is to bury the dead. Our bodies, my child, were made by God to possess the joys of Heaven for all eternity as well as our souls, and therefore a great respect is due to them. They have been consecrated to God by Baptism, and have been the dwelling-place of Jesus when He came into us in Holy Communion. And although, on account of sin, they must fall into corruption for a time, they will one day rise again, never to die. This hope of our resurrection should inspire us with a reverence for the departed, and

cause us to place what is human of them with respect in their last earthly home. This work is most pleasing to God and meritorious to ourselves.

TOBIAS'S REWARD.

"But after this," relates the Sacred Scripture, "when there was a festival of the Lord, and a good dinner was prepared in Tobias's house, he said to his son: 'Go and bring some of our tribe that fear God, to feast with us.'

"And when he had gone, returning he told him, that one of the children of Israel lay slain in the street. And he forthwith leaped up from his place at the table, and left his dinner, and came fasting to the body: and taking it up carried it privately to his house, that after the sun was down, he might bury him cautiously. And when he had hid the body, he ate bread with mourning and fear, remembering the word which the Lord spoke by Amos the prophet: 'Your festival days shall be turned into lamentation and mourning.'

"So, when the sun was down, he went and buried him. Now, all the neighbours blamed him, saying: 'Once already commandment was given for thee to be slain because of this matter, and thou didst scarce escape the sentence of death, and doest thou again bury the dead?'

"But Tobias fearing God more than the king, carried off the bodies of them that were slain, and hid them in his house, and at midnight buried them.

"Now it happened one day, that being wearied with burying, he came into his house and cast himself down by the wall and slept, and as he was

sleeping, hot dung out of a swallow's nest fell upon his eyes, and he was made blind.

"Now this trial the Lord therefore permitted to happen to him, that an example might be given to posterity of his patience, as also of holy Job. For whereas he had always feared God from his infancy, and kept His commandments, he repined not against God because the evil of blindness had befallen him, but continued immovable in the fear of God, giving thanks to God all the days of his life. For as the kings insulted over holy Job: so his relations and kinsmen mocked at his life, saying: 'Where is thy hope for which thou gavest alms and buriedst the dead?'

"And Tobias rebuked them, saying: 'Speak not so: for we are the children of saints, and look for that life which God will give to those that never change their faith from Him.'"

And when the angel Raphael afterwards had restored his sight to him, he said: "'Prayer is good with fasting, and alms more than to lay up treasures of gold. I discover, then, the truth unto you. When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord. And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee. And now the Lord hath sent me to heal thee, and to deliver Sara thy son's wife from the Devil. For I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord.'"

Tobias ii., xii.

ST. ODILO BURIES TWO BODIES FOUND BY THE WAYSIDE.

One day, when St. Odilo of Cluny was on a journey, he saw lying on the road the bodies of two children who had died from cold and hunger. He went over to them, and, taking off some of his own clothes, covered the children with them ; and having engaged men to bury them, he himself accompanied them to the grave. " It is not to be doubted," says his historian, " that his angel guardian offered up this good work to God, as the angel Raphael did that of Tobias, and that God in return granted him an exceeding great reward for his charity."

LII

THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

I. To Convert the Sinner.

Among the seven Spiritual Works of Mercy, there is none so pleasing to God as that one which has for its object the conversion of sinners. It was the work which occupied Our Divine Lord during His mortal life on earth. The Apostles and the Saints laboured unceasingly to continue this good work, and great is now their reward in Heaven. O my child, you also shall one day have a share in that same reward, if by your prayers and good works you bring sinners to God!

THE BEAUTIFUL PROMISE.

St. James the Apostle announces to us in his Epistle the immense reward God will give to those who endeavour to convert sinners from their evil ways. He says:

"My brethren, if any of you err from the truth, and one convert him, he must know that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." *St. James* v. 19.

"BEHOLD HOW SINNERS TREAT HIM!"

One day the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Colette whilst she was fervently praying for the conversion of sinners. In her hands she held a basin, in which lay her Divine Son Jesus, all covered with blood, and as if torn and wounded in every part of His sacred body.

The Saint was filled with horror at this awful sight, and as she was gazing on it with pity and tearful eyes Our Lady said to her: "O my dear child, take pity on me, and above all on my dear Son Jesus! Look at the way in which sinners treat Him."

These words filled the Saint with more zeal than ever in her prayers for the conversion of sinners that Jesus might have less to suffer at their hands.

A STUDENT CONVERTED BY HIS SISTER'S PRAYERS.

M. Henri Jouve, who was a student of the law in the city of Grenoble, had, like the most of his comrades in the college, forsaken the path of virtue which a Christian education had pointed out to him, and was following that of evil, which would lead him to eternal ruin hereafter. But God, Whom he had at one time loved and served so faithfully, was pleased in His mercy by a miracle of His grace to bring him back again to the path of innocence.

M. Jouve had a sister named Aloysia, who was a religious in the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Grenoble. Many were the bitter tears she shed in the solitude of her cell for her unfortunate brother, for he had continually refused to listen to her

counsels, and treated her pious exhortations with contempt.

But in a short time her broken heart found a refuge in the bosom of God. She offered herself as a victim for her brother's conversion, and her sacrifice was accepted. Her prayers and tears had ascended in the sight of God, and she died that he might live.

When her brother was informed of her death, the news made little or no impression on him ; nevertheless, he went to the convent that he might for the last time look on the face of one who was so nearly related to him. Courtesy required this of him, but he was determined not to say or do anything that would be considered beneath the dignity of his social position.

In taking this resolution he was far from anticipating what was to take place when he entered within the convent walls. No sooner had he passed the sacred threshold than he felt his heart moved by strange emotions for which he could not account. He was led in a short time to the room in which his deceased sister lay upon her bed of death, calm and tranquil as if she were asleep or in the attitude of prayer, and at this unexpected sight all his resolutions to remain indifferent melted away. A new feeling to which he was altogether unaccustomed took possession of his soul, and he fell down on his knees at the side of the bed and wept.

The Superioress, who was present, was also moved to tears as she saw him performing this act of devotion, and, going over to him, she presented him with the ring his sister had been accustomed to wear on

her finger. This he gratefully accepted; then, rising from his knees, he went to the chapel where the funeral service was soon to be celebrated. Here his former resolution once more gained the ascendancy. He would indeed assist at Mass with all the decorum the circumstances demanded, but he would be careful to repress every sentiment of emotion that might arise within him.

But here, again, Nature, or rather the grace of God, overcame his determination. When the coffin, still open, was borne into the church, and he saw her remains reverently placed on a bier before the altar, and heard the sorrowful yet hopeful strains of the Church's *Requiem*, his resolutions again vanished, and tears flowed copiously down his cheeks.

When the service was over, and all that was earthly of his sister consigned to their last resting-place, he returned home and spent the rest of the day alone in his house, buried in sadness and melancholy. On the following morning he returned to the convent to request the Superioress to give him a small portion of his sister's hair. During the time he spent in the convent he could speak of nothing else but the dear departed one.

A few days afterwards he again returned, and asked to be led to his sister's grave. The Superioress willingly consented, but besought of him that, while kneeling over it, he would make a promise which she knew would be the most acceptable and pleasing to his dear departed Aloysia.

He looked at her in astonishment. "What promise do you require me to make?" he asked.

"Let your own heart tell you what it is," she replied.

On hearing these words he became agitated, and trembled from head to foot. "Calm yourself," she said. "Kneel down and pray, and in doing so you will find consolation."

He refused.

The Superioress continued: "Do not resist this great grace of God. Cast for ever under your feet that human respect that enslaves you." And as she said these words she herself knelt down at a little distance and prayed earnestly for this soul pursued by grace.

M. Jouve walked up and down the room in great agony of mind. Frequently he struck his forehead with his hand, and at last he obtained relief in words. "O Aloysia, what do you want of me? What can I do for you, my sister?"

After spending about two hours and a half in this manner he went towards an image of Our Lady which stood on a little altar in the room, and, falling on his knees before it, he made a promise in his heart—yea, a promise greater than his sister would have ever asked of him; then, rising up from his knees, he repeated more than ten times these words: "Yes, let us go—let us go. I have promised much, but I am not sorry that I have done so. Let us go. It is now time for me to ratify these promises on Aloysia's tomb."

The Superioress immediately led him thither. He again burst forth into tears as he threw himself on her grave. There he renewed the promises he had made, and ended by saying:

"Yes, Aloysia; it is your wish, my sister, and it shall be done."

And what did he promise? He promised not only that he would approach the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist, but that for the time to come he would consecrate himself to God without reserve—that he would renounce the world and become a religious.

Oh, wonderful indeed is the power of prayer for the conversion of those sheep which wander from the fold! On that day did this fervent penitent begin a new life; on that day he gave himself entirely to God. In course of time he entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus, and became one of its most distinguished members by his piety and his learning. *Catech. morale par Guillois*, iii. 11.

"PRAY FOR POOR SINNERS."

It is recorded in the Life of St. Stephen, the founder of the Order of Grammont, that one day he was preaching to a numerous audience on the terrible evil of mortal sin.

At the end of the sermon a man approached him, and said: "Notwithstanding the discourse you preached just now, to which I have listened attentively, I have no desire to be converted, and I would indeed be very much disappointed if I came to know that you or any other one was praying to God for that intention."

The Saint was astonished on hearing these words, and as he thought over them he burst into tears; then, ringing the bell, he gave orders that all the

religious dwelling in the monastery should come to him immediately.

When they were all assembled, he said to them: "Let us all kneel down, my brethren, and pray to God for this poor blind man."

The man returned home, but he did not long remain there. A few hours afterwards he returned to the Abbot. God had spoken to his heart in answer to the prayers of His servants, and showed him the state of his soul as it appeared in His eyes. "O Father," he said, with tears of sincere contrition in his eyes, "I am sorry for what I said to you. Forgive me; and I promise now, by God's grace, and by your holy prayers, to change my life, and never again to return to the paths of iniquity, which I now renounce for ever."

St. Stephen took occasion from this incident to show his disciples the power of prayer for the conversion of sinners. *Lives of the Saints*, February 8.

"LET US SAY TOGETHER ONE 'HAIL MARY'"

A certain man was, on account of his great crimes, condemned to death. A priest, full of zeal for the salvation of his soul, went to him to prepare him to die well. But the wretched man would not as much as allow him to speak to him about God and eternity. The priest wept for him, and besought him with words full of earnest entreaty, and even threw himself at his feet, to try to touch his heart. But all was of no avail; the heart of the criminal, harder than flint, would not yield.

As a last resource, the priest had recourse to the

Most Holy Mother of God ; then, full of the most heartfelt compassion for the wretched man, he said to him : " Before I leave you, will you grant me one little favour ?"

The man, more to get rid of him than from the desire of pleasing him, answered that he would.

" Let us, then, say together one ' Hail Mary !' "

So they began together that holy prayer. But scarcely had they said the first words of it, when there came over the poor man a feeling of repentance. Tears fell from his eyes, and the next instant he was on his knees at the feet of the priest, and when the prayer was ended he begged of him at once to hear his Confession.

He then confessed all his sins with every mark of sincere sorrow, and when the time of his execution came he calmly died, pressing the image of Mary to his breast.

II. To Instruct the Ignorant.

It is through ignorance, my child, that many souls are lost. They do not fulfil the Will of God, because they do not know it. Jesus Christ came down from Heaven to teach us what we must believe and practise to obtain Heaven. Great also will be our reward if we, as far as lies in our power, by word or example teach others to know God and serve Him. The Holy Ghost in the Scripture says to us : " They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity " (Dan. xii. 3).

THE LOVE OF GOD FOR ST. JOSEPH CALASANCTIUS.

St. Joseph Calasanctius was raised up by God that he might teach His little ones how to know and love Him. This work he persevered in for the space of fifty-two years with the greatest zeal, because he knew that it was one that was most pleasing to Jesus Christ and to His Blessed Mother.

It is related that he himself, with his own hands, would sweep the schools, and that when the hours of school-work were ended he would conduct the children to their homes that they might not fall into bad company on the way. The children all loved him, because they saw that they were to him very dear, and that his one desire was to make them happy.

From the highest heavens Jesus and His Most Holy Mother Mary looked down with love on the pious master and his little pupils.

One day, as the children were learning their Catechism and their prayers at school, the place in which they were assembled was filled with a beautiful light from Heaven. All were astonished at this miracle, and stood gazing at each other in wonder, and as they were thus looking they suddenly saw the Most Holy Mother of God appear in the midst of the light, carrying in her arms the Divine Child Jesus. She looked on them and their saintly master with a smile of heavenly sweetness on her august countenance, and her Blessed Child, raising up His little hand, blessed them. After this the vision disappeared.

About a century after the Saint's death God was

pleased in a miraculous manner to show how pleasing had been to Him his life and labours ; for when his grave was opened they discovered that his entire body had been reduced to dust with the exception of his heart and his tongue, which were intact—his tongue that had so often taught God's little ones to know God and love Him, and his heart which loved so much the Christian doctrine which he had taught them.

From his Life.

PAUL, THE LITTLE ORPHAN-BOY.

When the Rev. Father Smet, of the Society of Jesus, was preaching the Gospel to the natives of Oregon, in America, there was a little orphan-boy named Paul, who had the greatest difficulty in learning his Catechism, and even his prayers. He was an innocent boy, and full of piety ; above all things, he was never known to tell a wilful lie.

One of the Christians of that place, whose name was John, seeing that the boy had the greatest difficulty in learning the truths of Faith, charitably offered to teach him ; yet, notwithstanding his great patience, Paul could not retain the instructions that were given him.

On Christmas Eve, in the year 1841, Paul went as usual to the hut of the good Christian to learn his prayers and his Catechism, but John was absent, and Paul had to remain a long time waiting for his return. It was dark, and there was no light in the hut.

Suddenly the place was filled with a dazzling light, and in the midst of it stood a beautiful Lady, brighter still. In one moment she taught him his

prayers, and instantly disappeared. Paul immediately ran to the house where Father Smet dwelt, and with a countenance full of joy began to recite his prayers. This time he said them all, from beginning to end, without making even one mistake.

" Tell me, my child," said the Father, " how you have been able to learn your prayers so quickly. Surely God Himself must have come and taught you."

Paul answered : " While I was waiting for John to come home it began to be very dark, and in an instant the room was filled with—oh, such a brilliant light ! Then I saw a beautiful Lady enter. Her feet did not touch the ground, and she was dressed in a white robe with a veil upon her head. Under her feet I saw a serpent holding in his mouth a kind of apple I never saw before. I also saw bright rays of light coming from her hands and falling upon me. On seeing this beautiful Lady I was at first filled with great fear, but in a few moments the fear went away. Then I felt my heart, as it were, burning in my breast, and my mind became so clear that I could understand all things at once. I do not know how it was, but in a moment I knew all my prayers and my Catechism."

Not long afterwards, someone gave Paul a little medal of the Immaculate Conception. As soon as he saw on it the figure of Our Lady he cried out : " That is the Lady I saw in the bright light in John's hut !"

So it was Our Lady herself who had come to teach the poor savage child how to say his prayers.

SCHOUPPE : *Inst. Relig.*, i. 20.

ST. GREGORY, APOSTLE OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

The great Pope St. Gregory, knowing the sad state in which the Christian Religion had been placed in Greater Britain since the Anglo-Saxons had obtained the government of that kingdom, resolved to send thither missionaries who would instruct the people in the law of God. He himself chose from amongst the clergy of Rome forty monks, and placed at their head St. Augustine, the Superior of the Monastery of St. Andrew in that city.

These missionaries went forth with great enthusiasm; but after a few days' journey they became discouraged, for they heard from people on the way of the barbarity of that nation, the difficulties they must meet on their long journey thither, and the impossibility of making themselves understood by those who did not know the language in which they spoke. They hesitated to continue their journey, and besought Augustine to return to Rome, and inform the Pontiff St. Gregory of what they had heard, and beg of him not to insist on their undertaking this perilous mission, especially as the success of it was so uncertain.

The Pope sent back their Superior with a letter to them, in which he commanded them not to faint on the way, but to persevere with zeal in the accomplishment of the work entrusted to them.

Augustine and his companions, having passed through France, embarked on the narrow strait which separated them from the scene of their future labours, and in a short time they landed on the Island of Thanet.

The Angles and the Saxons, who inhabited that part of Europe now called Germany, had become masters of the southern part of Britain, and had divided the country into seven kingdoms ; one of these was Kent, which, although not of considerable extent, was important on account of its situation. Ethelbert, the first King of that country, was united in marriage to the Princess Bertha, daughter of Caribert, King of Paris, who had consented to this union only on condition of his daughter having the freedom of professing the Christian Religion to which she belonged.

Immediately on his arrival at Thanet, St. Augustine sent to the King of Kent interpreters whom he brought with him from France, as St. Gregory had enjoined him to do. The French and the Anglo-Saxons spoke a language which they both understood, but St. Augustine could only speak in the Latin tongue. These messengers were graciously received by the monarch ; they informed him that Augustine had come from Rome to announce to him and his people the good tidings of the Gospel, the knowledge of the true God, and the promise of a Kingdom which would never end.

Ethelbert desired to have a little time to consider the nature of their mission, and in the meantime gave orders that they should be entertained with great hospitality ; this he did more readily as Bertha the Queen professed the same Faith.

Then he went forth into a wide plain, where he might receive them in the open air, so much was he filled with fear of any magical influence. The missionaries then went forth to meet the King in

solemn procession, headed by a cross-bearer carrying aloft a silver Crucifix and a picture representing Our Divine Lord, while they sang hymns and litanies.

When the King had signed to them to sit down upon the grass, Augustine went forward to the monarch, and thus spoke to him through an interpreter : " I have come hither, O King, to teach you how you may reign after your death, even as you reign now, but in a glory far surpassing all earthly glory, because here on earth you may lose your crown, since you are surrounded by so many enemies, whereas in Heaven you shall have nothing to fear, and your joy will be everlasting."

"That is a beautiful discourse," answered the King, " and these are splendid promises, but as they are very uncertain, I cannot bring myself to confide in them, or to give up the practice which I have so long followed, and which is that of all my people. Nevertheless, since you have come so great a distance, and since, it seems to me, that you are desirous of imparting to others the knowledge of what you consider to be the truth, I will not hinder you from receiving into your Religion those of my subjects whom you may be able to gain, and it is my will that my people shall provide you with all that is necessary for your comfort and support."

The missionaries having thus received the authorization of the King, began at once their work. They imitated the Apostles in their zeal to propagate the truth, and were prepared to suffer if necessary for the " Faith that was in them." They entered processionally into Canterbury, the capital of the kingdom, singing these words : " We beseech Thee,

O Lord, to turn away Thy wrath from this city, for we have sinned against Thee."

Many of the people, moved by the grace of God and the simplicity and virtues of these apostles of the truth, believed in their words, and asked to be baptized. The King himself in a short time was converted, and received the Sacrament of Baptism. His example led many others to embrace the Faith, but, knowing that faith is a gift of God, he was careful not to compel anyone to become a Christian unless such a one was persuaded of the truths of Christianity.

St. Augustine died on May 26, 607.

Migne Dic. d'Anecdotes, col. 897.

III. To Counsel the Doubtful.

My child, in their journey through this world towards Heaven, their eternal home, many people require to obtain advice, so that they may walk upon the path which God has chosen for them in the way that is most pleasing to Him. It is true that it is principally to God's pastors that these should apply in their difficulties, but it not infrequently occurs that even the laity may with profit give them such counsel as their experience has taught them. To counsel the doubtful is one of the Spiritual Works of Mercy.

THE TWIN BROTHERS.

About the year 288 there lived at Rome twin brothers. The name of the one was Marcus, that

of the other Marcellinus. They were Christians, but their father and mother were pagans.

When Diocletian was putting to death all those who were faithful to God, these two brothers were also arrested and brought before the Judge. They were asked to deny the true God and to worship idols, but they firmly refused, and for this they were condemned to death.

But their father, who was a man of a high position, obtained from the Judge a delay of thirty days, to see if he could make them yield. He tried every means he could think of to shake their courage, for he was fond of his two boys, and was determined to save them from the cruel death to which they were condemned.

The first who came to visit them in their prison were some of their old companions who had been their most intimate friends.

"Why are you so foolish," they said, "as to throw away your lives—you who are so young and have so many chances of enjoying yourselves? And your parents, too, who love you—your death will be their death, for they cannot live without you. Have pity on your dear old father and poor heartbroken mother, whose grey hairs you are bringing with sorrow to the grave."

Scarcely had they said these words when Marcia, their mother, came into the prison; she was the picture of despair; her long white hair fell in disorder over her shoulders, and her eyes were red with weeping. She ran up to her sons and pointed to her bosom on which they had slept so happily when they were little children, and where they had re-

ceived so many marks of her maternal love. "My own dear children," she said, "remember how I suffered for you when you were born, and the care with which I brought you up, and how I have watched over you until now; and in return for all that love you are going to kill me with grief."

Tranquilinus, their father, who was an old man and suffering great pain, was carried in on a chair; He was not able at first to speak from grief, which overpowered him, but wept and sobbed and embraced them, first the one and then the other, with fatherly affection.

"O my children," he said at last, "farewell, farewell for ever! You are determined in your folly to throw away your lives. So I am come to speak to you for the last time—to you, my sons, whom I have ever so tenderly loved. All is over now—farewell!" and the poor old man could say no more.

But there was still a greater trial. The door of the prison opened, and their two wives entered along with their little children. The sight that now met the eyes of the brothers pierced them with the keenest grief.

"Who will now take care of your wives and your little ones? You often said that you loved us. Where is now that tender love? You are going to leave us to the mercy of strangers, and your little ones to perish because there is no one to protect them. Oh, pity us, and for our sake—the sake of your wives and your little ones—save yourselves from death."

This last and terrible trial, those tender words and the little children's piteous cries, made them tremble. They were silent ; the enemy was on the point of gaining a victory when God, Who is always near us when He sees us in danger, came to their assistance.

At that moment Sebastian, a Christian officer and one of the chief guards of the Emperor, came forward. He had entered unseen, and was a silent witness of the terrible battle.

" O brave and faithful soldiers of the King of Kings," he said, " stand firm ! Do not allow yourselves to be overcome in this terrible conflict ! Tears may prevail over women, fair words may persuade weak men, but surely they can never have any power over you. No, I am certain that neither the tears of your parents, nor the fondness of your wives, nor the tender caresses of your children, nor the loss of your worldly goods can ever make any impression on you.

" Has not Jesus Christ said : ' He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me ' ? You aspire to the glory of Heaven, and those who do this trample under their feet all worldly things.

" You have already confessed Jesus Christ ; you have already suffered much for Him, and are even under sentence of death for Him. Is it possible, then, that a few tears shall overcome *you*, whose constancy could not be broken by pains and torments ?"

With these and other burning words did the holy

Sebastian speak to them to encourage them to persevere and be faithful.

Then, turning to the bystanders, he said: "Do not let these two young men lose Heaven for the short comforts of this life. Do not grieve for their departure from you, for they are going to a kingdom of joy and happiness to pray for you that you may come to know God here, and go to possess Him with them in Heaven hereafter."

Then Marcus said: "My most loving parents, my dearest wife and little ones, the worst thing a man can do in this world is to love it more than God. We must take more care of our souls, which can never die, than our bodies, which must die so soon. Let us lose this wretched life, then, that we may gain an eternal one in Heaven."

Then, turning to his brother, he continued: "Brother, let us fight bravely like soldiers of Jesus Christ; let us die for Our Heavenly Master, and let us strive to see which of us will first reach our home above."

These words made such an impression on those who heard them that with one accord they also wished to join a Faith that made men such heroes. Everyone present became a Christian, and many of them laid down their lives for their Faith, as those two brothers did.

IV. To Comfort the Sorrowful.

Our life in this world is filled with many sorrows and afflictions, both in body and soul; we cannot escape them. But God, my child, has in His

Fatherly goodness put it in our power to lighten the burden of those who are sorrowful by giving them comfort by our sympathizing words and our charitable actions. Our Blessed Lady herself is our model in this respect. Are we not accustomed to say to her in our daily prayers, " Comfortress of the afflicted, pray for us " ?

THE STORY OF ST. PAULINUS.

During the time that Italy was invaded by the Vandals, many of the people were taken to Africa, where they were sold as slaves. The holy Bishop Paulinus, full of compassion for them, sold all the property he himself possessed, as well as that of his church at Nola, that he might help those unfortunate captives in their slavery.

One day, after he had exhausted all his means in this pious work, a poor widow came to him overwhelmed with grief. " O Father," she exclaimed, " my son has been captured by the Vandals ; for the love of God give me some money that I may go and ransom him."

The Bishop went to see if by chance he might yet find something to give her, but his search was fruitless ; he had already given all he possessed, even to the last farthing.

So he returned to her with a sad countenance, and said : " My good woman, I have no money—it is all spent ; but there is one thing I can do for you. I can give myself to the Vandals in the place of your son."

When the poor woman heard these words, she looked on him in wonder. She imagined that he had

said them to give her some consolation in her distress and to show her how much he grieved for her, but she was far from thinking that he meant them as literally true. But he soon showed her that he meant to the very letter the words he had spoken. "Take me as your slave, and bring me into Africa, and ask them to accept of me in exchange for your son."

The woman would on no account consent to do this until the Bishop urged her, and even compelled her, to do what he had suggested. "Be not afraid," he said; "God will be with me and protect me." So they both set out for Africa.

When they were brought into the presence of the son-in-law of the King, to whom the slave belonged, the widow said: "Here is a man who will take the place of my son, if you will only consent to restore my child to me."

The Prince, casting his eyes on St. Paulinus, who was disguised, and being pleased with his appearance, agreed to the exchange. The holy man was loaded with chains, and the son of the widow, having regained his freedom, returned to Italy with his mother.

The Saint was appointed to work in the gardens which surrounded the palace, and as the Prince often went thither to walk, he used sometimes to converse with him. These visits in course of time became more frequent, for there was a charm in the holy man's conversation that drew the Prince away even from his most intimate friends that he might enjoy it.

Every day Paulinus brought to the palace the

produce of the garden for the royal table, and in return would receive a small allowance of food, after which he would humbly return to resume his labours.

When he had led this kind of life for a long time, he one day said to the Prince secretly : " Take heed, and consider attentively in what manner the kingdom of the Vandals ought to be governed, for in a very short time the King shall die."

The Prince, who was beloved by the King above all the members of the royal family, having heard these words, went to him and related to him what the gardener had told him, at the same time praising his admirable conduct in words which raised in the King's mind a great desire of seeing him.

Paulinus was sent for, and as soon as he appeared in the presence of the King the latter suddenly began to tremble, and said to his son-in-law : " What this man said to you must be true, for last night I saw in a terrible dream many judges who were seated on the tribunal of judgment, and amongst them was this man, and, on account of the sentence they pronounced upon me, the scourge with which I am accustomed to punish my slaves was taken out of my hands. Ask him, then, to tell you who he is, for I am sure he must be some great person."

The Prince then, turning towards the Saint, asked him to make known to them who he really was.

" I am the slave whom you accepted in the place of the widow's son," replied the Bishop.

The Prince in answer said : " I do not ask you what you are now ; I ask you what you were before you came into Africa—when you were living among your own people."

" Know, then," replied Paulinus, " that although unworthy, I am a Bishop of God's holy Church."

The Prince was seized with great fear on hearing these words. Bowing reverently before him, he said : " O great and holy man, ask of me whatever you may desire, that I may send you back to your own country loaded with presents."

The man of God, encouraged by these generous words of the Prince, answered : " There is one favour, O Prince, which is in your power to grant me, and one I desire above all things else to obtain : it is that you will restore to liberty all my countrymen who are at present slaves in your kingdom."

The Prince joyfully acceded to his request, and immediately sending forth messengers, they brought to the palace all the prisoners they could find in Africa who belonged to the country of Paulinus. When this was done, the Prince bade adieu to his former slave, and sent all the other captives back along with him to their own country and their homes. He also took care to furnish ample provisions for their journey as a sign of his good-will towards them.

Not many days afterwards the King died, according to the prediction of the Saint.

Thus did God reward the charity of St. Paulinus, who, following the example of Jesus Christ, of his own free will became a slave to redeem the widow's son. Instead of one only being brought home, he was the means of the whole of his countrymen being freed from bondage, and, like Joseph in Egypt, became the saviour of his people.

Life of St. Paulinus.

RESIGNATION AND CONSOLATION.

A good Father already advancing in age had a son, whom he looked forward to as the support of his declining years, a beautiful and noble young man of only twenty-two years.

But God, Who loved him even more than his earthly father, took him to Himself in Paradise, lest he might be contaminated by the world.

" My heart is broken," said he one day to the priest, who went to visit him to give him consolation, " for he was all to me I had on earth. But in the depths of my soul I feel a great joy—a joy I cannot describe : my child is with God in Heaven. Yes, Father, I loved him, and he loved me. But even now, if God gave me the opportunity of seeing him again alive and with me as before, I would not accept it. My son's soul is with God, and will be happy throughout all eternity. Everything else is of no value to me."

Thus did God Himself console his faithful servant in his great sorrow.

Les Veillées des Adorateurs du S.S., 294.

V. To Bear Wrongs Patiently.

My child, Jesus Christ, in that beautiful sermon He preached to the multitudes on the mountain, said to them : " Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My Name's sake : be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in Heaven." Now, it is by bearing patiently all kinds of wrong that we become more and more like unto God, for God

permits His children, for their greater perfection, to be persecuted unjustly, not by their enemies only, but even often by their friends.

ST. APOLLONIUS AND PHILEMON.

A certain man called Philemon, being angry with St. Apollonius, uttered against him in his presence words of insult and reproach. But the holy man listened to him unmoved. "My friend," was his only answer, "may God forgive you, and lay not to your charge any of those words you have spoken against me."

The result of this mild answer was that Philemon was moved to compunction for what he had said, and became one of the Saint's dearest friends, and when in the end St. Apollonius was led forth to martyrdom, Philemon accompanied him, and died by his side.

THE PROMISE OF OUR LORD TO ST. ELIZABETH.

St. Elizabeth was one day kneeling in prayer when the thought of the injuries she had received from so many who ought to have befriended her came in rapid succession before her mind. Instead of permitting herself to be moved by any feelings of resentment, she besought God, with all the fervour of her soul, to shower down His choicest blessings on them all in return for these injuries.

Our Lord was pleased to answer her: "My daughter, of all the prayers you have ever offered up to Me, there was not one so pleasing to Me as the one you have just now said, and in return I tell you that by it you have obtained the remission of all your sins."

Life of St. Elizabeth.

VI. To Forgive Injuries.

Jesus Christ tells us, my child, that we must love our neighbour as ourselves. He did not mean to limit our affection to our friends or to those whom we love, but He commanded us to extend it even to our enemies, and the manner in which we show Him that we love our enemies is, before all things else, to forgive them for the injuries they may have committed against us. He Himself has given us the example when on the Cross He prayed to His Heavenly Father for those even who were putting Him to death : " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

" she has already pardoned you," replied the sister.

Archbishop Ryan, in the course of a sermon, related this incident : " During our Civil War in America two Sisters of Charity, walking together through the streets of Boston, were insulted by a wretched man through hatred of the religious garb they wore. Subsequently this man went into the army as a substitute for someone who had been drafted into it. He was wounded in one of the battles in Missouri, and brought to a temporary hospital in charge of Sisters, and, of course, was most kindly treated. When about to die, the Sister in attendance on him begged him to ask pardon of God for the sins of his life, and to prepare to meet his Judge.

" Sister," replied the dying soldier, " I have been a

bad man, but there is one act of my life that weighs more heavily upon me than all the others. I once insulted a member of the Order which has now treated me so kindly, and, sick as I am, were she only here now I would fall at her feet, beg her pardon, and die in peace."

"She has already pardoned you," replied the Sister; "the moment you were brought in here I recognized you by that mark on your forehead, and I long ago pardoned you from my heart."

"And why," rejoined the soldier, "have you been more kind to me than to the others?"

"It is because you insulted me so much, and for His sake," she added, kissing her crucifix.

"Send immediately for your priest," said the dying man. "The religion that inspires such fortitude must be from God."

And the priest and the Sister knelt together as the soul of the dying soldier passed to God, Whose mercy is above all His works. *Ave Maria*, xxxvi. 20.

ST. GILES AND THE KING OF THE GOTHS.

Near the place where the River Rhone falls into the sea there is an extensive woodland in which there was, about the middle of the sixth century, a cave hidden among the thick bushes which grew on the banks of the river, and near it a fountain of limpid water refreshed the greensward that surrounded it. In this place St. Giles took up his abode, hoping that there he would live concealed from the world, and be enabled to meditate on heavenly things without interruption.

In that solitary wilderness he lived in perfect happiness in the contemplation of the things of God; and his Heavenly Father, ever mindful of the necessities of His children in this world, sent daily to his cave a doe, which provided him with sufficient milk for his sustenance.

It happened one day that Childebert, the King, was hunting in this solitary forest. The dogs that were with him, perceiving the doe in the woods, gave it chase, and the poor animal in its fright fled to the cave where the servant of God dwelt, and, falling down at his feet, seemed by its caresses to crave his protection.

One of the huntsmen who accompanied the King shot an arrow into the cave in order that he might slay the animal; but the arrow, instead of striking it, wounded the humble Saint, who was kneeling at his prayers. When the hunters reached the cave, they found the servant of God bathed in blood, and the doe nestling uninjured at his feet. When they went to the King and made known to him what they had seen, he was filled with a great fear, and did not dare to approach the cave.

On the following morning he went to the Bishop who ruled over that part of the country, and told him what had occurred, and in his company proceeded to the place where the Saint dwelt. As soon as he entered he fell at his feet, and besought him to pardon his servant who had wounded him.

The holy man, raising him up, embraced him, and instantly pardoned the injury that had been unknowingly inflicted on him. But as the King desired to bestow on him some mark of his favour, he,

at the request of St. Giles, erected in that same place a monastery where men might come and dedicate themselves to a religious life, and where they might continually pray to God for his eternal welfare. St. Giles became its first Superior, and by his prayers and his holy life converted many from their sinful ways to become the perfect children of God.

RIBADINEIRA: *Lives of the Saints.*

VII. To Pray for the Living and the Dead.

When Our Blessed Lord taught the Apostles the Lord's Prayer, the first words He uttered were, "Our Father, Who art in Heaven," to place before our minds the consideration that we are all brethren and the children of Our Heavenly Father, and that as such we are bound to pray, not only for ourselves, but for all mankind.

We must pray for them whilst they are in this world exposed, as we ourselves are, to its temptations and dangers, that they may obtain from God the grace of doing His holy Will here, and may thus receive the gift of final perseverance; and our prayers must also follow them into the world beyond the grave, that if they are suffering in purgatory for the temporal punishment of sins committed while on earth, they may be the sooner released and admitted into the presence of God in Heaven. For "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins" (2 Machab. xii. 46).

God has promised to us an ineffable reward for this great work of charity.

THE VISION OF BLESSED CAPRUS.

In the island of Crete there once lived a holy priest named Caprus. Full of zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, he laboured without ceasing to fulfil the sacred duties of his calling.

But Satan was full of rage when he saw how zealously this good priest laboured in the vineyard of the Lord, and he raised up a very bad man, who by his example did much harm among the people.

Caprus was grieved to the heart when he saw the evil that was done, and wondered how God could permit a man to live who was the cause of so much evil.

But God was pleased to show him in a vision how dear to him is every soul, even the soul of the most obstinate sinner, and how much he desires us to pray for the salvation of all, both good and bad. The following is the vision he had as he himself told it :

" Satan stirred up a certain man who was leading a very bad life to do a great deal of evil amongst my flock. The first great evil that he did was to lead into sin a man who was very pious, and to make him also very wicked.

" I was full of anger when I saw this, and instead of praying to God, that by His grace the one who had gone astray might be converted, and that the other who had been the cause of his fall might also by a special grace become a fervent convert like St. Paul, I was filled with great indignation, and my mind was embittered against them to an unspeakable degree.

" In this state of mind I retired to rest one night. About the middle of the night, when I was accus-

tomed to rise for prayer, I awoke, but felt so disturbed in mind that it was quite impossible for me to say my prayers. I knelt down, however, as usual, but there were so many distractions in my mind that I scarcely knew what I was saying. The thought that those two wicked men were going about trying to ruin souls for which Jesus died, and by their wicked conduct leading astray those who were in God's grace, made me feel quite unhappy, and in my zeal I cried out to God: 'O my God, it is not just that these two wicked men should be allowed to live and to do so much evil by their bad example; so, O my God, I beseech Thee take them out of this life at once, and show them no mercy, since they have done so much harm to Thee, in the persons of those whom they have led into sin.'

"But God in His goodness wanted to show me that these two men, wicked as they were, were precious to Him, and that He had shed His blood for them as well as for me. For when in my earnestness I had said that prayer, I suddenly felt the house in which I was, shaken; then I saw it divided into two parts, and the roof taken off; after this there seemed to come down from Heaven a great fire, and it came into the house, and was placed before my feet.

"After this I looked up, and I saw the heavens opened, and Jesus, the Just Judge of the living and the dead, seated on His throne of judgment, surrounded by an immense multitude of angels. Then I saw at my feet, at the side of the immense fire, the ground open, and far below there was a deep, dark abyss, which seemed to have no bottom, and terrible to look at.

" Then I saw standing on the very brink of the abyss the two men against whom I had prayed ; they were trembling from head to foot, and their countenances were pale with terror, for they were on the point of falling into it.

" Then I beheld coming forth out of this abyss a great number of hideous serpents ; they went straight up to the two men, who, when they saw the terrible beasts, became more and more afraid. Then, I saw the serpents begin to twist themselves round the two men, and by their united force to drag them down with them into the dark dismal gulf.

" I also saw as it were wicked spirits in human shape dancing around them. Then it seemed to me that the two men began to fall into the pit. I was very glad in my own mind when I saw this, and I said to myself : ' Now they will get the punishment they deserve, and will no longer bring souls to ruin by their bad example.'

" Still, although they were tottering on the brink of the pit, they were able in some way or other to keep themselves from falling into it, at which I was very angry, for I was so anxious to see them fall in and disappear from my sight for ever ; so I went over to where they were standing and tried to push them in, but I was not able to do it, for just at the moment when I expected to see them fall in, they struggled so much that they kept their footing, even on the brink of the great pit.

" Then I became exceedingly angry when I saw that, notwithstanding all my efforts and the united efforts of the wicked spirits and the serpents, these two men still stood safe on the firm ground. In my

wrath I raised up my mind to Heaven to ask the Just Judge Who was upon His throne to help me to destroy them, when, behold, I saw a sight, and heard words, which in an instant changed my anger into compassion, and my prayer for vengeance into one for mercy and pardon.

" I saw Jesus sitting as before upon His throne. His face presented an appearance of compassion and of love. He rose up from His throne, and came down from Heaven towards me. There seemed to be tears in His eyes, tears of affection. He went straight to the two men, and instead of pushing them into the pit He stretched out His hand—the hand of forgiveness—towards them, and they were full of joy and of gladness when they saw the immense love of Jesus for them. Then He told His angels to go and drive away the evil spirits, and send back the serpents into the pit again.

" After that he turned towards me, and seemed to be very angry with me, for He said : ' Come and strike Me, for I have such a love for men, and My Sacred Heart is so full of zeal and desire for their salvation, that I am willing to suffer and die over and over again for poor sinners such as these. Oh yes, to suffer and die again would give Me intense joy if only sinners would be sorry for their sins, and resolve never to do them again. And tell Me,' continued Jesus, ' tell Me what good would it do to you if, as you asked Me in your prayer, I had sent these two men into that terrible bottomless pit ? What good would it have done you ? How much better would it have been both for Me and for them, and for yourself too, if you had prayed for their conversion, that

they might for ever live with Me and My good angels in Heaven!'

"So saying, Jesus disappeared, and the vision came to an end. I fell down on my knees and prayed, no longer for justice against sinners, but for mercy, for God now made known to me the infinite value of a soul, even the soul of a sinner who had grievously offended Him."

SURIUS *in Vit. S. Dionysii.*

THE INSTITUTION OF ALL SOULS' DAY.

It was St. Odilo of Cluny who first appointed one day every year to be set aside in a special manner for prayer for the faithful departed.

It happened that a certain religious belonging to France was returning home from Palestine, where he had gone to visit the places consecrated by the footsteps of Our Lord when He was on earth. A tempest arose when crossing the Mediterranean Sea, and he was cast upon a desert island. There dwelt on this island a holy hermit who lived in a cave, conversing continually with God, and leading a life of austerity and penance. He received the stranger thus cast upon his island home with great charity, and when he learned that he was from France he suddenly said to him: "Do you know a certain abbey in France which is governed by a venerable Abbot named Odilo?"

"Yes," replied the stranger, "I know the Abbey of Cluny, and also the saintly Odilo; but how have you come to know him here in this solitary place?"

"There is," replied the hermit, "not far from this cave a deep chasm from which issue terrible flames.

In the midst of these flames I have seen millions of souls suffering most agonizing tortures for the faults they committed when on earth. Wicked spirits are there by permission of God to increase their punishment, tormenting them without ceasing, until their expiation is completed. In the midst of the frightful cries that arise from the abyss, I heard the evil spirits complain, in words of the deepest rage and hatred, that many of these souls were snatched from them long before the time fixed for the termination of their punishment, and were led to Heaven in triumph by the prayers and alms of the faithful, and in particular by the prayers and penances of Odilo, Abbot of Cluny, and his religious.

" Wherefore I beg of you, in the name of God," continued the hermit, " to relate faithfully on your return to France what I have now told you, and to ask these pious and saintly religious, and the venerable Abbot Odilo, to continue their holy prayers and alms and even to augment them, that the happiness of the blessed in Heaven may be increased, and that the evil spirits may be confounded more and more."

On his return to his native country, this religious went to Cluny, and in the presence of Odilo and his community related what the hermit had told him. Then Odilo, to commemorate the event, and to increase in the hearts of those under his charge a greater devotion to the holy souls in Purgatory, appointed November 2 as a day when special prayers and Masses should be offered up for the repose of the faithful departed. This soon spread over the whole Church, and is known by the name of " All Souls' Day."

LIII

THE EIGHT BEATITUDES

When Our Blessed Lord, my child, began to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven to the people of the Jews, He was followed by them wheresoever He went, because they loved to hear the words that fell from His lips.

"And seeing the multitude," says St. Matthew (chap. v.), "He went up into a mountain, and when He was set down, His disciples came unto Him. And opening His mouth He taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,'" and the other Beatitudes, of which you are now about to read.

I. "Blessed are the Poor in Spirit."

Our Divine Lord, in coming into this world, chose to be born and to live in poverty. He had always a special favour for those who were poor, and in the first Beatitude he says to us: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

To be poor in spirit is to take off all our affections from the things of this world which we may possess, or, if we are really poor, to be content with the position in which God has placed us.

A HERMIT'S PRAYER.

In the Life of St. Gregory the Great we read that a certain hermit, who had lived alone in the desert for many years, in the practice of all the virtues inseparable from the life of a solitary—prayers, penances, and mortification—besought God with great fervour to make known to him the reward prepared for him in Heaven, since He had promised to grant a high place in that kingdom to those who had left all things to follow Him.

An answer was vouchsafed to him one night during his sleep that the reward prepared for him in Heaven would be equal to that which was to be accorded to St. Gregory the Pope, on account of his life of poverty.

Hearing these words, the hermit was astonished and disturbed in mind, fearing that the poverty he was endeavouring to practise could not be pleasing to God, if it did not procure for him a greater reward than that which was to be given St. Gregory—a man so highly placed in the Church, and surrounded with the pomp and grandeur of his dignified position.

And as he was day and night deploring his unhappy condition, Our Lord was pleased a second time to appear to him, to console him. He said: "It is not the goods of the world which a person may possess that makes one rich, but it is the affection he has in his heart for them. You have contented yourself with comparing the riches of Pope Gregory with your poverty, you who are much more attached to the branches and the humble

covering of your cell than Gregory is to all his possessions, which from his heart he despises ; and which he makes use of only to help the needy and the poor. Therefore, in my eyes he is even more poor in his wealth than you are in your poverty."

MANSI : *Disc.*, n. 6.

II. " BLESSED ARE THE MEEK."

The meek, my child, are those that seek no revenge, but overcome evil with good.

THE TWO SOLITARIES WHO WERE NEVER ANGRY.

Once, long ago, it happened that there dwelt together in a solitary place in the East two men who had forsaken the world to save their souls in silence and prayer. They obtained food for their nourishment by cultivating a little garden, and quenched their thirst in the waters of a stream.

Now, the holy lives of these two solitaries soon became known throughout the whole of that country, and many people already began to call them Saints. The Superior of one of the religious houses in the neighbourhood also heard of their pious lives, and went one day to visit them to see if they were indeed as holy as they were said to be, or if they had only put on an appearance of sanctity that they might the more easily deceive others, and by hypocrisy procure for themselves the name of Saints.

When he reached their humble dwelling, the two solitaries met him, and, not knowing who he was, led him into it with every mark of fraternal charity. When they had prayed together for some time,

and recited psalms according to the custom of the Fathers of the desert, the Superior suddenly rose up and went out. The two solitaries also rose up and followed him.

Going into the garden, he took a heavy stick in his hand, and, without saying a word, began to destroy every plant and herb that grew there, so that in the end there was only one lettuce plant left, and the others were so much destroyed that they were rendered utterly useless for food.

The two solitaries stood at the gate of the garden looking with astonishment on the work of destruction, but not one word of reproach fell from their lips, nor did they even ask him the meaning of his strange conduct. They thought that he might be the Superior of one of the monasteries in the desert, and therefore that he must have had some reason of which they were unaware for acting in this manner. So they continued to stand there in silence, without even allowing one sad look to come over their countenance, or one disappointed thought to enter their hearts.

When the Superior had thus destroyed every plant in the garden with the exception of the one lettuce, he laid aside the stick and returned to the place where the two men were standing. "My brothers," he said, "let us now return to your cell and recite together our evening prayers."

So they entered the humble dwelling, and the two solitaries knelt down beside him, and recited along with him their prayers without manifesting in their demeanour the least sign of the sadness they felt at witnessing the total destruction of what they

had hoped would have been their food for the rest of the year, and which had been the result of long and tiresome labour.

When the prayers were ended, the elder of the two said to the Superior : " Father, with your permission, I will go into the garden and bring in for our supper the lettuce which you have left untouched."

When the Superior saw so much humility and patience in these two solitaries, he prostrated himself on the ground before them at their feet, saying : " I give thanks to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, because I have to-day seen that His Holy Spirit dwells in your hearts, my brothers. I beseech you, therefore, to persevere in the exercise of these virtues to the end of your lives, that when you have reached the end of your exile, they may accompany you to your heavenly home, and cause you to shine with exceeding great glory in the kingdom of your Father."

Tobias Lohn., v. 41.

THE CHRISTIAN HERO OF JAPAN.

Andrew Ousugamara was a man who held a high position in the town of Bungo, in Japan. He had been the first among the Christians of that city to embrace the Faith.

Having been informed that the pagan chief was drawing up a list of the faithful in order that they might be put to death, he, of his own accord, went to the tyrant, and said to him : " Put my name at the head of the list of the servants of God whom you are about to put to death, for I was the first to

embrace the Faith, and consequently the oldest amongst them."

Not content with preparing himself for the approaching combat, he wished also to encourage his father, an old man of eighty years, and formerly a soldier, who had become a Christian only six months previously.

"My father," he said, "it is not long since you have been a member of the Catholic Faith, and I do not know if you are sufficiently instructed about what martyrdom is, and how a Christian should die for Christ."

The old man, having answered that he was afraid that he had not yet learned what martyrdom meant, or what it required from him, Andrew said to him: "My father, one of the greatest graces God could bestow on a Christian is to grant him the privilege of dying for His sake; but those who aspire to that honour ought to be humble, gentle, and patient; above all things they must submit to death with resignation, laying aside any arms they may bear, and receiving the stroke of death on their knees without making any attempt to defend themselves."

The old man listened attentively to these words of his son about the glory of being a martyr for Christ's sake; but when he spoke to him of submitting to death without offering any resistance, this man, who had slain many an enemy in battle who had come to attack him, became full of wrath, and answered his son with great indignation: "What do you say? Do you think that a man of my position in this town would allow myself to be

massacred like a coward without offering any defence? No, no, my son; I will defend myself until my murderers have taken my sword from me, or have cut off my arm. If they kill me fighting in this manner, let them do so; I will then willingly be a martyr, but not otherwise."

Andrew, seeing that his father was not thoroughly instructed in the maxims of our holy Faith, again spoke to him with much gentleness and respect. "My father," he said, "I know that the family of the Ousugamara have always been renowned throughout all Japan for their bravery and courage in battle. You have often yourself given proof of this in the many conflicts you have sustained for the defence of our kingdom, and the preservation of its freedom; so in dying for Jesus Christ as the Christians die, no one will say that you have not shown to the end that firmness for which you have always been so conspicuous. Nevertheless, since you seem not to be as yet prepared to die as the martyrs die, I beseech you to retire for a time into the country along with your grandchild, that you may save his life: you will thus in him transmit to posterity the glory of our name, and you will have more ample opportunity of being better instructed in the maxims of our holy Religion."

His father had from the beginning of his son's answer shown manifest impatience, and when he had ended, he said, with all his native impetuosity: "Go you and hide yourself, if you have any fear. As for myself, I will stand boldly until my murderer comes near me; and when I have slain by the strength of my arm some of those who accompany him, I

will with the greatest joy die, and thus become a martyr."

Andrew, seeing the impossibility of restraining his martial spirit even in dying for God's sake, and not knowing what means he could employ to save him, had recourse to God in fervent prayer, and God, in a manner which he had never even thought of, bestowed upon the old man the grace to suffer martyrdom as became a Christian. It was by the example of his daughter-in-law, who, in her own endearing manner, gained him to imitate her, that this was effected.

This young lady was engaged in preparing a magnificent mantle, and when the old man inquired why she was thus occupied, she answered that she wished to be suitably attired when they came to fix her to the cross. He also saw that her servants and the other inmates of the house were similarly occupied in preparing their reliquaries, their crosses, and their beads, which they intended to wear on the day of their martyrdom, when they would be called upon to give their lives for Jesus Christ and His holy religion.

These words of one he so tenderly loved made so great an impression on him that in an instant his whole being seemed entirely changed. He threw away his arms, took his rosary-beads in his hands, and with the gentleness of a lamb, said to them: "I also, like you, will die without offering any resistance, and we shall all go to Heaven together."

It would be difficult to describe the joy that these words gave to Andrew. His first act was one of

thanksgiving to God, for the great grace of meekness He had bestowed upon his father, which produced such a sudden and marvellous change upon him.

As he had passed many years of his life in the company of those he loved, so now, in their company also, he left this weary world to wave the palm of martyrdom before the throne of God.

History of Japan, Book IV.

III. "Blessed are they that Mourn."

Our Blessed Lord in this Beatitude desired to teach us, my child, that those are blessed who, despising earthly comforts and pleasures, bewail their own and others' sins, and the occasions of them. "Blessed are they," said He, "because they shall be comforted."

THE MYSTERIOUS DREAM.

In a little town in the Province of Cilicia, named Cisau, there lived a young man called Simeon, whose occupation was to tend his father's flocks.

One day in the winter-time, when the snow lay on the ground, and when he could not lead his flocks to the fields, he went to the church with his parents to hear the Word of God. The words the preacher was explaining were these: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "To reach the happiness of Heaven," continued the priest, "you must renounce the vanities of this world, and endeavour with your whole strength to attain religious perfection."

On hearing these words, he prostrated himself on the ground, and besought Our Lord to show him the way that would lead him to that perfection. During his prayer, which was long and fervent, he fell asleep and had a dream. He dreamed that he was digging the foundations of a great house; and as he paused in the work, a voice said to him: "Thou hast not yet dug deep enough." He continued to dig deeper, till he thought he had dug to a sufficient depth. Yet the voice again and again told him to dig deeper still, and ended by saying: "If you desire to build an edifice that will resist every storm, you must labour without ceasing, for it is impossible to accomplish great things without continual labour."

After this he awoke, and thinking that the dream was an answer to his prayer, he at once resolved to leave the world and live for God alone. He immediately went to a monastery at some distance, and placed himself under the direction of the holy Abbot Heliodorus.

THE LAST WORDS OF ST. ANGELA.

"But the moment was at hand," says her historian, "when Our Divine Lord wished to take her out of this world to place her in His own throne in Heaven. She knew the day of her death a long time before it came, and announced it to her friends. As she lay awaiting its coming, she assembled them around her bed and gave them her last instructions.

"'O my dear friends,' she said to them, 'love one another; for without this you cannot see God in Heaven, nor gain any merit for the good you

perform. I can assure you that I received more graces from God when I wept for the sins of others than when I wept for my own. I know that the world will laugh at me for these words, but it is not by the judgments of the world that we are to be guided. Oh, try to love one another, and never to judge the actions of anyone! I leave no other testament but this one, that you love one another and be humble. I leave you the inheritance which Jesus Christ bequeathed to His beloved ones—poverty, sufferings, and to be hated by the world. Those who accept this legacy shall be my children, and the children of God, and they shall most assuredly inherit eternal happiness in the life to come.'

"Having said these words, she placed her hands on their heads, saying to each as she did so: 'Blessed be thou of God and of me: may the right hand of Jesus, which was nailed to the Cross, also bless you.'"

ST. GERLAC, PENITENT.

In the Province of Limbourg, situated in the Netherlands, there lived in the twelfth century a rich and powerful nobleman named Gerlac. He was renowned for his great strength and his skill in the tournaments and athletic sports so common throughout Europe in the Middle Ages.

In his infancy he had been well instructed by his Christian parents, but by mingling in the society of the wicked he forgot the lessons he had then received, and lived a worldly and sinful life. When he grew up to manhood, he entered the married state. He had so great an affection for his wife that he would rarely leave her side, and found

perfect happiness in her company. If she was happy, he also was happy ; if she was displeased, he was filled with grief.

One day in the summer-time Gerlac went to a tournament that was held on his own domains, at which all the nobility of the country were assembled. During the sport every eye was turned towards him, for he performed feats of valour none could attempt to imitate.

When the events of the day were at their height, and when Gerlac was about to be proclaimed the hero of the tournament, he was seen suddenly to dismount from his horse. Someone had come to tell him that his wife was ill. In an instant he rushed like one insane through the crowd of spectators, and flew rather than ran towards the castle. As he drew near, his legs trembled under him, and his body was covered with a cold sweat.

When he reached the gate, the head butler, pale as a marble statue, met him.

" O sire," he said to him, " do not go into the castle ; your heart will break."

But he rushed on without saying a word. Another servant met him in the great hall : " O sire," he said, " do not go in, for death is in the house."

But he seemed to hear nothing. Onwards he sped towards the apartments of his wife. A lady-in-waiting was standing at the door. " Do not enter, sire," she said, " for there is death within."

But he heeded her not. The door flew open before him, and in another instant he was lying on the inanimate body of his beloved wife. She was dead !

Long and silently he lay there. No one dared to disturb him. The silence of death was in the house, and no one knew what would happen next. Every eye was on the door of the room where Gerlac was. Fear came upon them all, for they knew not what he would do, or how long he would remain there.

At length they saw him move. He rose up from the dead body. They looked into his face: it was calm. He once more bowed down over the body of his wife and kissed her forehead. They next saw him kneel down by the bedside, and heard him pray. They were astonished at this, for they had never seen him pray before. Then, rising up, he covered the face of his wife with a linen cloth, and, going towards the trembling servants, he calmly gave them the orders for the funeral. She was buried with great pomp, and he followed her remains to the sepulchre in silence.

When it was over he assembled the nobility who were present at the funeral, and all the members of his household, and said to them: "My friends, I am now going to serve God, and serve Him alone. I am now going to save my soul." Then, in their presence he laid aside his armour and his rich apparel, and, putting on sackcloth, bade them an eternal farewell. He then, in this attire and bare-footed, set out for Rome, that he might cast himself at the feet of the Pope to receive from him a penance suitable to the sins of his life. When he reached the eternal city Pope Eugenius III. received him with paternal kindness. Gerlac made to him a general confession of his whole life, during which he shed many tears; and His Holiness imposed on

him as a penance the obligation of serving the poor in the hospitals of Jerusalem for the space of seven years.

Gerlac joyfully accepted this penance, and immediately departed for Jerusalem. When the seven years were ended, he wished to remain there for the rest of his life, and hired himself to a certain farmer to tend his flocks. But Pope Adrian IV., who then occupied the chair of St. Peter, desired him to return to his own estates, that he might edify by his virtues those whom he had formerly scandalized by his sins. When he reached Limbourg, instead of going to dwell in his castle, he took up his abode in the hollow trunk of a tree which stood in the neighbourhood. There he spent the rest of his days in prayer and penance, which for its severity equalled that of the ancient solitaries in the desert; and when the time of his death drew near, a company of the angelic host descended from Heaven with the holy Bishop Servais, whom, when on earth, Gerlac had honoured and loved, and having received the last Sacraments at his hands, he calmly expired; and the angels, singing heavenly music, carried his soul with them to Paradise.

He died on January 5, 1170, and his body was interred with reverence in an abbey in the Diocese of Ruremonde, where God wrought many miracles through his intercession. Blessed are they who mourn for their sins, for they shall one day be comforted.

The Saints found their greatest consolation, my child, in meditating on the sufferings of Jesus Christ in His Passion. In the words of the prayers we

sometimes say, when performing the devotion of "The Way of the Cross," "My dear Jesus, we will mourn both for Thee and for ourselves, for Thy sufferings and for our sins which caused them." They endeavoured to give consolation to their Divine Master in His sufferings and sorrows, and in return He bestowed upon them the gift of His love, which gave them consolation in all their sufferings and afflictions. Join, then, with them in their pious mourning, and you, like them, will be comforted.

ST. BRIDGET'S MEDITATION ON THE PASSION.

St. Bridget of Sweden loved to meditate on Jesus' suffering. "My Lord Jesus Christ," she often said to herself, "was stripped of His garments, and derided; how, then, could I ever desire to be clad in rich garments? He was scourged, and fixed to the wood of the Cross by long iron nails; how could I, who am His servant and disciple, wish to be delivered from every pain and tribulation?"

In revel. S. Birg., 2, xxvi.

FATHER HERCULANUS'S SERMON.

Father Herculanus, of the Order of St. Francis, generally finished his sermons by the consideration of the infinite love which Jesus Christ crucified had for poor, ungrateful sinners. As he was preaching on a certain Good Friday, in the City of Aquila, his zealous words made so great an impression on those who were listening to them that everyone present began to weep and sob aloud. A certain noble matron, who was standing near the pulpit,

asked the preacher to cease speaking, that the people might cease to weep. "It is enough," she said; "we have shed enough of tears. O Father Herculanus, cease to preach any more, that we may cease to weep."

The good Father answered: "Oh, continue to weep, and do not interrupt your tears, for 'Blessed are they that mourn.'"

ST. CLARE AND THE PASSION OF JESUS.

Saint Clare, of Montefalco, whether she was awake or whether she slept, seemed to have always before her eyes Jesus suffering. One day, while considering more attentively the sufferings her beloved master endured for the salvation of souls, there appeared to her a young man bearing on his shoulders a heavy cross, and he said to her: "Clare, my daughter, I have been looking for a place where I might plant this cross, and I have found your heart, and there I desire to place it. You must therefore die to yourself on this cross if you wish to be my daughter and the heiress of my kingdom." From that time the thought of the sufferings of Jesus impressed itself so deeply on her heart that whatever she ate or drank had for her a very bitter taste, and whatever she saw, or thought of, or said, seemed to be filled with the bitterness of the Cross. After her death all the instruments of His Passion were, with His sacred image, found impressed on her heart. How great must now be her consolation in Heaven!

SURIUS *in Vita ejusd.*

JONATHAS THE ROBBER.

There dwelt in Syria a great robber whose name was Jonathas. One day, touched by the grace of God, he said to himself those words which we read in the Gospel the prodigal son said when he had reached the depth of evil: "I will arise, and go to my Father."

But to what place would he betake himself? Dangers from those he had injured threatened him on every side. In one place only could he hope to find a refuge, and this was beneath the pillar of the great St. Simeon, who was surnamed the Stylite, because he lived on a high column, in constant prayer with God.

Jonathas accordingly went thither, hoping to find himself in safety there from the pursuit of justice. On the way, moved by the grace of repentance bestowed on him by God, he wept unceasingly, and when he reached the place, he ran towards the pillar, threw his two arms around it, and embraced it.

The Saint, from the top of his column, saw him, and he asked him: "Who are you, my child?"

He answered: "I am Jonathas, the robber. I am filled with deep sorrow for my crimes, and I have come hither to do penance."

St. Simeon answered: "Be of good heart, my son, for 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.'"

Not long afterwards the officers of justice, hearing that the robber had taken refuge under the pillar of St. Simeon, came out from Antioch to appre-

hend him, and commanded the holy man to deliver him up to them.

" Not so, my friends," said he to them in answer. " He Who led this man to this place is mightier than we. He came into this world for the express purpose of saving those who are like unto this man, and to these belong the Kingdom of Heaven."

The officers at these words from the lips of one whom every person revered, did not dare to lay hands upon him, and returned to the city to make known to their superiors what had taken place.

Jonathas remained in the same place for the space of seven days, and on the seventh day he said to St. Simeon : " My master, if you will permit me, I will go farther away."

" What is this you say ?" asked the Saint. " Do you wish to forsake the penitential life you have chosen, and to resume once more the life of wickedness you had forsaken ?"

But the penitent answered : " No, my master, but my time has now expired."

By these words he desired to inform the holy man that the hour of his death was at hand, and that even already his agony had begun.

He had scarcely breathed his last when the officers from Antioch returned. Seeing he was dead, they were about to seize his body and cast it into a desert place that the wild beasts might come and devour it, but Simeon forbade them even to touch it, saying : " He Who led this man hither, and Who by His grace has received him into His kingdom, is the same One Who is able to overthrow your great city ; so touch not the body of one who is now in that

kingdom where no sorrow can enter, and where those who have wept and mourned for their sins in this world shall be for ever comforted."

VEITH : *L'Enfant prodigue.*

IV. "BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER JUSTICE."

Those who hunger and thirst after justice, my child, are those Christians who earnestly endeavour to grow daily in virtue and goodness, and to make others do so too.

ST. ANTONY RETIRES TO THE DESERT.

St. Antony was about twenty years old when his parents died and left him master of all their wealth, with the care of a sister who was very young.

Scarcely six months had passed after their death, when one day, on the way to the church, he, according to his custom, began to meditate on the life of Our Lord. He thought within himself how the Apostles had left all things to follow Christ; and how the first Christians had sold all their possessions, and laid the price they obtained for them at the feet of the Apostles, that they might distribute it to such as were in want; and how great would be the reward in Heaven of those who acted in this manner.

When he went into the church, the first words he heard were these: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow Me."

These words he considered as addressed to himself

by Our Lord, and when he returned home he at once sold all his lands, and, collecting together all his money, distributed it among the poor, reserving only a small sum for the use of his sister. Some time afterwards, when he heard in the church that part of the Gospel where Our Lord warns his disciples not to be solicitous about the morrow, he resolved to part even with his house. So, having recommended his young sister to the care of some devout virgins, to be trained up in their way of life, he left the world to lead a life of perfection in the desert far away from the abode of men.

Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.

THE HERMIT SAINT OF IONA.

In one of the wildest districts of Donegal, in Ireland, about the end of the sixth century, a lady of royal descent was expecting the birth of a child, who, if a son, would probably succeed to the throne which his ancestors had held for six hundred years.

One night, in a dream, an angel appeared to this woman, bringing her a veil covered with flowers of rarest beauty ; but as she gazed, the veil was lifted by the wind and carried away over plains and mountains, so that she saw it no more. Then said the angel to her :

" Thou art about to become the mother of a son who shall lead innumerable souls to the heavenly country, and be reckoned among the prophets of God."

Soon afterwards the child was born, and was baptized Columba, and the priest who had thus

made him an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven took charge of his education as he grew older.

Columba loved books, which were then rare indeed, and we hear that with his own hand he transcribed three hundred copies of the Gospels and of the Psalter. After a time this Saint resolved to exile himself from his dearly-beloved island as a reparation for his many sins, and departed with twelve companions in an osier-boat covered with hide, that he might preach the Gospel to the heathen. The spot where he landed took the name of I-colm-kil ("the island of Columb of the Churches"), but is more familiar to us as Iona. A legendary story tells that Columba really set foot first upon another islet, but finding that from it he could still see his dear Ireland, he immediately got into his boat to seek a shore from whence no glimpse of his native country could be obtained. Reaching Iona, he mounted its highest point, and as Ireland was quite invisible, there he remained and built huts of branches for himself and his brethren.

If Columba was sad at heart in his exile, he did not allow that sadness to interfere with the work he had undertaken, and so powerfully did he preach Christ to those around that the wild and savage became docile as children, and the most hardened sinners were brought to shed tears of repentance.

But the heart of the Saint was turning to that part of Caledonia where dwelt the Picts, who were still heathens, and the last thirty years of his life were spent in the missions to them. On one of these journeys on the banks of Loch Ness he said to his companions :

"Let us make haste and meet the angels who have come down from Heaven, and who wait for us by the side of an old man who is a Pict, who, according to the natural law, has done well all his life to extreme old age. We must baptize him before he dies."

Himself then old, Columba hastened on, outstripping the pace of his disciples, and reached a secluded valley, where he found an aged man, who listened to his teachings, received baptism, and immediately resigned his soul into God's keeping.

Towards the latter part of his life Columba found it necessary to make several journeys to Ireland, for the visitation of monasteries he had founded there.

One day he saw a poor old woman gathering herbs, and even nettles, for her food, whereupon he was filled with self-reproach, because he was better fed than she. So the old Saint went home to his monastery, and gave orders that he also should be served with wild herbs and nettles, and he was much displeased when the monk Diarmid threw a little butter into the cauldron wherein this miserable food was prepared.

It seemed as if it was God's Will to make known the future glory of Columba by permitting a heavenly radiance to surround him in his time of prayer; his monks could see his cell brilliantly lighted during the night, while their master sang God's praises, and it was a light which dazzled them with its exceeding brightness.

One winter's night a young man remained alone in the church while the others were resting, and all at once he saw the holy old Abbot enter, and a

golden radiance seemed to come from the roof and light up the entire building. These signs were observed for several years before the death of Columba; but at length one day he was found gazing heavenward with a wonderful joy glowing upon every feature, which presently gave place to a look of deep sadness. Two of his monks knelt at his feet, and implored him to say what had been revealed to him, and then he told that it was thirty years that day since he had landed in Caledonia, and that he had always prayed that his time on earth might end with those thirty years. But then he added: "When you saw me so joyous, I was already able to see the angels coming for me, but suddenly they stopped upon that rock beyond our island, as if they could not approach me; and thus I am sad, for I know that the prayers of many are obtaining from God that I should still dwell in the body."

Four years more passed by, and now the holy man again spoke of his death. It was the end of May, and he desired to take leave of some of the monks who were at work in the fields on the western side of Iona; but as he could not walk by reason of weakness, he was drawn in a cart by some oxen. When he reached the desired spot, he told his brethren that he had hoped to die during the Festival of Easter, but had prayed to linger until it was over, lest his departure might change that time of rejoicing into sadness. Then he blessed the island and its inhabitants, and returned to the monastery; but on the following Saturday he told Diarmid that it was his last day on earth. We hear that as he

spoke an old white horse which had daily carried milk to the monastery, came and put its head on his shoulder, as if bidding his master farewell.

"Leave him with me," said Columba, when Diarmid would have driven the faithful creature away. "God hath revealed to this poor animal what He has hidden from thee; he loves me, so let him weep for my departure."

After this the Saint went to his cell, and set himself to the work he was then engaged upon, in transcribing the Psalter. At the Thirty-third Psalm he stayed his hand, saying, "Baithru will write the rest." As the bell rang for matins, Columba hastened, first of them all, to the church, and knelt down before the altar, and there—when the lights were brought—the monks found him dying. Once he opened his eyes, full of a most joyful peace; once, too, he tried to raise his hand in blessing, but even as he made the attempt he drew his last breath, and fell as it were asleep; but it was the sleep which knows no earthly waking, for Columba was now at rest for ever. *The Chimes*, February, 1886.

V. "Blessed are the Merciful."

The merciful are those who freely pardon all injuries and relieve those that suffer.

CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

Who could tell the multitude of sinners St. Bernard brought back to God, even when there seemed to be no hope of their conversion?

It happened once that the Saint went to visit

a certain Count named Theobald. As he drew near the city where he dwelt, he met a multitude of the citizens leading out a great criminal for execution.

St. Bernard went up to the man, and, taking the rope by which they were dragging him, said: "Leave this man to me; I myself want to punish him."

When it was announced to the Count that Bernard had come to the city, and that he had stopped the execution of the robber, he rose up in haste, and went to see what he intended to do with him, for he had the greatest esteem for the holy man.

When he came to the place and saw Bernard with the rope in his hand, and the criminal walking behind him, he cried out in horror: "Ah! venerable Father, what are you going to do? And why are you going to save from punishment a man who has deserved a thousand deaths on account of his crimes? Oh, I beseech you, leave him alone! It is not right to allow such a wicked man to escape."

"Most excellent Count," replied the Saint, "it is not my intention to allow him to escape; I mean to punish him even more severely than you intended to do. You have condemned him to a punishment which will only endure for a few moments; I intend to subject him to one that will end only with his life."

Saying these words, the Saint took off his cloak and put it around the shoulders of the condemned man, saying: "Come with me to my monastery in Clairvaux, and I will show you how I can punish in this world those who are guilty, that they may be saved in the next."

The poor man, grateful to St. Bernard for having rescued him from death, became under his spiritual Father a model of virtue even to the other religious, and afterwards died a holy death.

VI. "Blessed are the Clean of Heart."

The clean of heart are those who are careful to keep their minds free from impure thoughts, and from the love and desire of all unlawful and vain things.

THE GOOD OLD INDIAN.

Two missionaries were travelling in India, preaching the Gospel, and labouring to gain souls to God. As they were passing through a wood, one of them suddenly said to his companion : " I would like very much to go into this forest. Who knows but perhaps we may find here some work to do for God ?"

The other answered that he thought it would be very foolish indeed to leave the beaten track in so desolate and dangerous a country, and that it would be far better and safer for them to pursue their journey, and rest in some town or village by the way.

The other, however, paid no heed to his words, but immediately left the highway and plunged into the forest. His companion followed him, not at all pleased at his unaccountable conduct. For a long time they wandered about without meeting any sign of human habitation, and the one who had objected in the beginning now began to reproach the other for causing them to lose so much precious time and

bring on so much fatigue for no purpose. Still they continued to advance deeper and deeper into the wood.

When they were on the point of giving up their search, and of returning as they came, they saw at a little distance from them a small hut made of the branches of trees. They went up to it, and found, on entering, an old man, who was evidently dying.

" God be praised !" said the first missionary ; " we may be able to save this poor man's soul. I feel as if God had sent me hither for this very purpose."

Going up to the dying man, he asked him in the language of the country, which he could speak a little, if he had ever heard of God.

" I know," he replied, " that there is a Sovereign Being Who made me. I do not know Who He is, but I would like very much to know Him."

" It is that great Being," said the priest, " Who has sent me here to speak to you, and to tell you Who He is and what He wants you to do. Tell me my friend, would you be willing to do all that His law enjoins ?"

" Oh, sir," replied the old man, " who am I that I should refuse to obey Him Who made me and this great world and all that is in it ?"

" Then tell me, have you not sometimes killed other people, as your countrymen so often do ? for this is one thing strictly forbidden by His law."

" No, I never killed anyone. I would not wish anyone to kill me, so I never did to another what I would not wish to be done to myself."

"But did you not steal sometimes?"

"Never. I have not much myself—only my hatchet and bow and arrows. I would not like these to be taken from me, so I never took anything away from another."

"But you have told lies, have you not?" asked the priest.

"What is meant by telling lies?" the old man asked.

"To say something which you know is not true."

"Oh, I have never done that," he replied. "Whenever I ask anyone a question, I expect them to give me a right, true answer, so I always do the same when I am asked anything."

The missionary continued the examination on every point of the moral law, and, to his surprise, discovered that the poor old man had never in all the course of his long life wilfully offended God by any grievous sin.

He then instructed him in the principal mysteries of our holy Faith, and asked him if he wished to be baptized, and made a child of the great God Who made all things.

"Ah!" he answered, "can it be that what you offer me is possible?—that I, a poor, miserable, forsaken old man, can be called the child of that great Being?"

"Yes," replied the missionary, with tears in his eyes at such a wonderful example of God's love—"yes; the great God in Heaven is our Father, and we are His children, and no father on earth can love his children as much as God loves us. It is because He loves us that He made the sun to shine upon us,

and the trees to shelter us ; and He has taken care of you every instant since you came into the world, and preserved you in all the dangers which you ever met with ; and, to crown all, He has expressly sent us to you to prepare you to enter His kingdom in Heaven, where He will give you a happiness which will never end."

As the priest was speaking, tears flowed from the fading eyes of the poor Indian. The other missionary had gone in the meantime in search of water to baptize him. He looked in vain for some brook or spring ; the ground was everywhere hard and dry. At length he found water where he least expected it—in the centre of a large concave leaf. The old man was baptized, and the two missionaries remained by his side till his death, which took place soon afterwards. They then pursued their journey, more and more impressed with the thought that our Father in Heaven loves His children on earth with an infinite love, and there is not one of His creatures, even in the remotest wilds of the world, but is an object of His paternal care.

The innocence of this good Indian who did not know God ought to be a reproach to us, who have been brought up in the knowledge of His law since our infancy, and who have so often treated Him, our dear Heavenly Father, so ungratefully. But it shall never be so again.

VII. "Blessed are the Peace-Makers."

Those are called peace-makers who seek peace with God, and who keep peace with all men.

ST. MONICA, THE PEACE-MAKER.

In the days of St. Monica, as in our own days, wives used to complain among themselves of the harsh treatment they pretended to receive from their husbands, of their angry words to them, and would even point out the wounds and bruises caused by the blows they inflicted on them.

St. Monica would listen patiently to their complaints until they had been all poured out, and then used to answer, with a smile: "Yes, these are indeed things to be regretted; but do you think that you yourselves may not have been, at least in some manner, the cause of them, and that by your words or actions you might not have been a source of provocation to them, whom you are naturally and by your position bound to respect? Our husbands are our superiors, and it is unbecoming in us to treat them as if they were our equals, or even in an inferior condition to ourselves."

It was thus on every occasion that she endeavoured to make peace in their homes. It also frequently happened that when these women disputed with each other, without any hope of coming to an understanding, they would go to St. Monica, and expose to her, each from her own point of view, their complaints, generally speaking of the offending one in terms of bitterness, if not of hatred. The task of reconciling them was often very difficult, but, knowing how pleasing it is to God to cast forth from our neighbours' hearts all malice and ill-will, she laboured to extinguish the fire of discord, and to

enkindle the flames of sisterly charity. "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God."

THE MISSIONARIES AMONG THE NEGROES.

On the banks of a river which flows majestically through the virgin forests of the New World there was, in the year 1834, a village formed of huts erected by the negroes who inhabited that part of the country. By the zeal of the missionary Fathers who visited them, many had embraced the Catholic religion. So long as the good fathers remained among them, these poor negroes gave great edification by their fervour and piety, but when they left them for a time to evangelize other places, this fervour began to diminish.

Amongst these converts were a man and his wife, between whom there used to arise disputes, accompanied by bitter words, which were followed by so much hatred for one another that they refused even to eat of the same food, or warm themselves at the same fire, and were a source of scandal to all their neighbours.

When one of the missionaries returned to visit this little community, he was not long in being informed of the conduct of these two converts. Desirous of bringing them to a better understanding, he ordered them to be brought before him. He then said to them: "Tell me, why is it that you are thus divided, not only in your worldly possessions, but also in your affections?"

The answer they gave convinced him that the

disunion had arisen from the effects of imagination, and from the bad counsels they had received from their friends.

The Father then said to them : " My children, you must mutually forgive each other. You are Christians, and as such the brethren of Jesus Christ, Who has given us the commandment to love one another as He has loved us ; and His love for us He manifested by His death on the Cross, and the shedding of the last drop of His blood for us.

" In the Name of Jesus Christ, therefore, my children, forget the past, and renew the love you had for each other in the beginning. Let charity live in your hearts, and peace and union in your homes. God will bless you, and will bestow upon you His choicest graces."

When the missionary had ended, a change had come upon them, and they both exclaimed with one voice : " O Father, it is true that we have sinned, and we humbly ask God's pardon."

Then, turning towards his wife, her husband said : " I forgive you ; will you also forgive me ?"

" Oh yes, from my heart !" she answered—" I forgive you from my inmost heart. I am truly sorry that I ever grieved you, and henceforth I will love you always."

The good Father fervently thanked God for this happy change. " My children," he said, " from this time I feel assured that your lives will be full of peace and harmony. How happy you must be to-day ! I wish that everyone whom your past conduct might have scandalized should be edified by your reconciliation. I wish that your friends

and relatives should share in your joy, and in the happiness which to-day fills your hearts."

Full of gratitude for this encouraging advice, the only words they could utter were: "O Father, how good you are!"

The solemn promise they then made was sincere, as was proved by their fidelity in accomplishing it.

Trésor des Noirs.

VIII. "Blessed are they that Suffer Persecution."

My child, the eighth Beatitude is: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." And Our Blessed Lord Himself explains this Beatitude in these words: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake: rejoice and be glad, for your reward is very great in Heaven" (St. Matt. v. 10).

THE FARMER AND THE LITTLE CATECHISM.

John Chantebel was a simple farmer, who lived in the Diocese of Rennes, in France, during one of the savage revolutions which devastated that unhappy country. He was a fervent Catholic, and well instructed in the truths of his holy Religion. Wherever he went he always carried with him a Little Catechism, such as is usually placed in the hands of children, in which are contained in a few pages everything that relates to our holy Faith, in doctrine and in practice. This little book he fre-

quently read, that he might ever be reminded of his duties to God.

In the eyes of the enemies of religion, the possession of this Little Catechism constituted a great crime. They ordered John to be apprehended and brought before the magistrates, who ordered him to cast the book into the fire. For this purpose a fire was kindled in the room, and Chantebel was led over to it. The order was again renewed, and the punishment to be inflicted if he refused was again made known to him. Still he courageously refused. They then placed in his hand a lighted torch, that he might in this way burn the book.

He answered: "Never shall I be guilty of such iniquity. This little book contains the principles of my Faith, and you will never succeed in making me renounce it."

They again threatened, but still he remained unmoved. Then one of them, seizing the fiery torch, burned his hands with it.

While enduring this pain, he cried out to them: "You can burn not only my hands, but also my whole body, if such is your determination; but know this—I will never, never do anything unworthy of my religion."

His enemies were confounded at these words, but not vanquished. A new order was issued that he should be conducted ignominously through the streets of Martigny, seated on horseback, with his face turned towards the tail of the animal.

This was accordingly done; but Chantebel submitted with resignation, his whole countenance manifesting the inward joy of his heart at being

thus enabled to suffer ignominy like his Divine Master, and for His sake.

As he was thus passing through the streets, his wife saw him ; and as he approached the place where she was standing, she drew near to him, and cried out : " Well done, my brave husband ! Take courage ; it is all for the sake of our good God, and He will reward you."

Thus did these devout people suffer for the sake of Christ ; for they knew that to profane the Catechism was to insult Jesus Christ Himself and the truths of Faith it contained. *Anecd. Chrét.*, 476.

THEODOSIA AND HER SON NEANIAS.

Theodosia had an only son, named Neanias. When he reached his twentieth year, Theodosia was eager to advance his interests, and for this reason she presented him to the Emperor Diocletian.

To gain the favour of the Emperor, Theodosia told him that, in spite of all her efforts, her husband had died a Christian, but that she had carefully trained up her son for the service of the Emperor, and the gods of the empire.

Diocletian, being a deadly enemy of the Christians, was pleased to hear that Theodosia had brought up her son a pagan. He immediately placed Neanias at the head of a troop of soldiers, and sent him to Alexandria, with orders to hunt out the Christians there and put them to death.

Theodosia was overjoyed, and Neanias, who had learned from his mother to hate the Christians, resolved to distinguish himself by his zeal against

them, and thus advance in the esteem of the Emperor.

He at once set out with his troops, breathing fire and slaughter, when—O wonderful mercy of God !—as he neared the city of Apamea, he heard an interior voice saying to him : " O Neanias, whither are you going ?" At the same time he saw a cross in the air above him. Startled by what he saw and heard, he halted instantly. In a moment a brilliant flood of light illumined his soul. He called to mind all that his father had told him of the religion of Jesus Christ. At that moment, touched by the grace of God, he resolved to become a Christian.

Instead, then, of attacking the Christians, he turned his arms against the bands of marauders which infested the country, and completely routed them. He then went to Alexandria, where he was fully instructed in the Faith.

On his return, his mother, not knowing that he had become a Christian, was transported with joy at the news of his great victories.

" Yes, mother," he answered, " I have gained a victory far more glorious than all these. I have conquered myself. With the grace of God, I have become a Christian."

" What, my son !" cried out Theodosia in amazement, " you a Christian ? Surely you are jesting !"

" No," replied Neanias ; " I am in earnest." Then, drawing from his bosom a cross that he wore, he showed it to her, and kissed it reverently. He then broke to pieces all the idols that were in the house.

At the sight of this Theodosia became so enraged that, scarcely knowing what she was doing, she rushed to the Emperor, and denounced her own son to him as a Christian and an enemy of the gods.

Diocletian was surprised at this news. He sent for Neanias, spoke kindly to him at first, then threatened him with the most terrible torments if he did not at once renounce the new religion he had adopted. But Neanias remained firm. Diocletian at this became enraged, and ordered him to be put to the torture. At first Neanias was beaten with rods, then cast into prison to give him time for reflection.

On the following day, as Neanias still remained firm, he, with a number of other Christians, was put to the most frightful tortures. Theodosia was present, with many ladies of rank. She hoped that her son, overcome by his sufferings, would at length renounce the Christian Faith, which she hated so intensely. She noticed, however, that, on the contrary, her son, as well as the other martyrs, rejoiced in all their sufferings.

Suddenly, as she was there witnessing the wonderful constancy of the martyrs, the grace of God touched her proud heart also. She saw in that moment all the enormity of the crime she had committed in giving up her own son to be tortured. She was filled with shame and remorse, and, enlightened by God, she cried out in a loud voice: "I also am a Christian, as well as my son."

She was denounced to the Emperor, and led to the same prison to which her son had just been

brought back. Neanias was surprised to see his mother enter the prison, but how great was his joy when she informed him that she too had become a Christian, and that, with God's grace, she was resolved also to die for the Faith !

After many useless efforts to induce them to apostatize, mother and son had the happiness of dying for the Faith.

LIV

THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS

I. Why Certain Sins are called Capital Sins.

The reason, my child, why people commit sin is because of the inordinate love they have of themselves, seeking to do their own will instead of that of God, and to procure their own satisfaction rather than desiring to please Him.

There are some sins, seven in number, that are called Capital Sins, because they are the sources from which all other sins take their rise.

THE VISION OF ST. ARSENIUS.

We read in the lives of the ancient Fathers of the desert an example which puts before our minds in a clear manner how the people of the world are for the most part continually and foolishly occupied, considering only their present satisfaction, and neglecting to please God, or to live so as to obtain Heaven hereafter.

It is St. Arsenius who relates this example. He tells it as if it happened to another, although it was thought that he himself was the person to whom the vision was granted.

" One day, whilst one of the venerable Fathers of the desert was sitting alone in his cell, he heard a voice that said to him : ' Come, and I will show you the works of men.'

" The person who thus spoke brought him to a place where a negro was cutting wood, which he was gathering into a large bundle. When he had finished it, he tried to carry it, but found it too heavy ; whereupon, instead of taking out some of the wood, so as to lighten the burden, he cut more wood, which he added to it, which increased the weight so much that now he could not even move it.

" Having gone a little farther, he perceived a man standing by a lake, drawing water, which he poured into a vessel full of holes, through which the water ran back again into the lake.

" Afterwards he was brought to another place, where he saw a great building, like unto a temple, towards the door of which two men on horseback were riding abreast, carrying long poles on their shoulders. When they reached the door, which was very narrow, they tried to enter by it ; but as neither of them would consent to yield his position or get behind his companion, so that they might pass in one before the other, both were kept out, the length of their poles and the manner in which they carried them, together with the width of their horses, not permitting them to enter abreast.

" The person that showed him these things then told him that the action of these two men represented the conduct of so many Christians, who, while outwardly pretending to lead devout lives, are full of pride and self-conceit. Instead of walking

humbly in the way of Christ, they seek only their own pleasure in all they do, and to do their own will in everything.

"He also told him that the man whom they saw cutting wood represented those who were living in the state of sin, who, instead of lightening the burden of their sins by a penitential life, were continually increasing that burden by adding sin to sin; and that the man who poured the water into the vessel full of holes resembled those Christians who indeed do many good works, but lose all the fruit of them by mingling with them many that are evil."

Lives of the Fathers of the Desert, p. 571.

Wherefore, my child, you also should be watchful not to allow Satan to deceive you by his wicked stratagems, and to carefully avoid the Capital Sins of which you are now about to read, which are so dangerous to God's children.

II. Pride.

Pride is the first in order of the Capital Sins.

Pride is an inordinate love of our own worth or excellence. It was the cause of the fall of the angels in Heaven, and also the cause of the fall of our first parents in Paradise, and is now the cause of the daily loss of innumerable souls. My child, be careful to avoid this sin above all others, for it is the most dangerous sin that you can commit.

THE FALL OF THE ANGELS AND OF MAN.

When God in the beginning created the angels, He bestowed on them, as He afterwards bestowed

on man, the gift of free-will. He created them for Heaven, but He desired that they should merit it by acknowledging Him as their Supreme Lord and Master, and by submission to Him as their Creator, to Whom they owed all that they possessed.

Although the Scripture does not relate the history of the fall of Lucifer, the chief of the rebel angels, and of those who followed him in his rebellion against God, it clearly shows us that pride was the cause of their fall.

" How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning ? how art thou fallen to the earth that didst wound the nations ? And thou saidst in thy heart : ' I will ascend into Heaven ; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God ; I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like the Most High.' And yet thou shalt be brought down to Hell, into the depth of the pit " (Isa. xiv. 12 *et seq.*).

" Thus saith the Lord God : ' Thou wast the seal of resemblance, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty ; thou wast in the pleasures of the Paradise of God. Thou a cherub stretched out, and protecting, and I set thee in the holy mountain of God. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day of thy creation until iniquity was found in thee. And thy heart was lifted up with thy beauty ; thou hast lost thy wisdom in thy beauty ; I have cast thee to the ground " (Ezech. xxviii. 12 *et seq.*).

The fall of our first parents in Paradise was also due to pride. They desired, like Lucifer, to be like God. " In what day soever you shall eat thereof

[the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of Paradise] your eyes shall be opened ; and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." These were the words of the tempter.

" And the woman saw," continues the Scripture, " that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold ; and she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband, who did eat " (Gen. iii. 5, 6).

O my child, pride was the first great sin, and the one which destroyed the beauty of so many of the angels, and brought so much evil upon mankind. Watch over your heart carefully, and banish therefrom every thought which might lead you into the danger of committing it.

DEATH OF HEROD AGRIPPA.

In the year 42 Herod Agrippa went down from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, where a solemn festival was to be held in honour of the Emperor Claudius. From every part of the province a great multitude assembled, not only of the common people, but also of the magistrates and nobility.

On the second day of the games Herod went to the amphitheatre, and took his seat upon the throne that was prepared for him. He wore a mantle of cloth of gold, which shone in the light of the sun with great brilliancy. When the people saw him thus attired, and heard him speak, they cried out with a loud voice which reached his ears : " It is the voice of a god we hear, and not that of a man. Long live the god Herod !" Then they

with one accord ran forward to the foot of the throne and knelt before him, as if to worship him, some asking favours, and others imploring mercy, as if he were really a Divinity. Herod, instead of seeing in their conduct base flattery, drank in all they said, and accepted the homage they offered him, as if he were really Divine.

But the punishment of God suddenly overtook him, for as he was in the very act of accepting the homage they were offering him, he began to feel terrible internal pains and a gnawing in his bowels. This pain became so unbearable that he could not refrain from uttering piercing screams, which in an instant silenced the shouts of the multitude, and filled them with intense fear.

"See!" he cried out in his agony—"see! your god is going to die!"

His attendants immediately carried him out of the amphitheatre into an adjoining room. The recent joyful acclamations of the crowd were now changed into wailings, and the splendid games were abruptly brought to an end. The intense torments he endured increased at every moment. Everything the physicians' art could suggest to alleviate the pain was of no avail, and after five days of unremitting torture, the like of which has never been read of in human history, the unfortunate Herod expired. His body was a mass of corruption, and the worms were devouring it even before he died. So great was the stench it emitted that it was impossible for anyone to enter the room wherein he lay.

Such was the terrible end of that proud man, who

had dared to mock Jesus Christ in His Passion, and who, in the conceit of his heart, had considered that he was equal to God.

History of the Church, First Century.

HOW THEODORET'S MOTHER WAS CURED OF PRIDE.

Theodoret, the eminent Church historian, relates that his mother suffered a great deal from a diseased eye. Having heard of a holy hermit, who dwelt in a cell near Antioch, she went to him, in the hope of obtaining a cure. She was only twenty-three years of age, and very beautiful. Being fond of dress, she decked herself out in bracelets, earrings, and other costly ornaments, trying by every means in her power to add to her personal charms.

At the sight of all this splendour, the man of God conceived the idea of curing the good lady's pride, an evil which, in his eyes, was much more to be regretted than her bodily affliction.

"Daughter," said the venerable anchoret, "were a painter, uncommonly skilful in his art, to execute a portrait, and were a man, altogether ignorant of painting, to give it some additional touches, can you suppose that the artist would not feel affronted? Then, my child," continued the holy solitary, "can you doubt that the Creator is offended at your seeming to tax His wisdom with ignorance, and His skill with awkwardness, by endeavouring to improve and to perfect His work in your own person?"

"My mother," continues Theodoret, "cast herself at the feet of the Saint, and thanked him for his salutary admonition. Then she humbly solicited

him to obtain from God the cure of her eye. Through humility, he resisted her importunities for a long time ; but, overcome at last, he made the Sign of the Cross upon her eye, and it was instantly cured. As soon as my mother returned home, she threw away her cosmetics, cast off her ornaments, in which she gloried so much, and ever after dressed in the neat, simple, and unaffected way which the man of God had recommended." *Ave Maria.*

A FALL THROUGH PRIDE.

Among the disciples of St. Macarius was one of the name of Valens. During the first years he lived in the desert he even surpassed many of his brethren in the practice of austerities. But Satan put into his mind the thought that he was so holy as to be already worthy of conversing with the angels of God.

Instead of banishing this temptation, he allowed it to rest in his mind, and the Evil One, seeing the advantage he had gained, one day, transforming himself into an angel of light, appeared to him, accompanied by other wicked spirits, also in the same form, carrying torches. One of them said to him : " Jesus Christ is so pleased with your holy life that He is coming to honour you with a visit ; come forth, therefore, to meet Him and adore Him."

Valens, in great joy, immediately went out of his cell, and, thinking it was Jesus Christ he saw before him, he fell down and adored Satan himself. When he had done this, the vision ended.

Next day he went to the church where the brethren were assembled, and boldly said : " I do

not need, like you, to go to Communion, for Jesus Christ Himself has come to visit me."

St. Macarius, who knew what had happened, rebuked him for his great pride, and asked the brethren to pray for his conversion. He also ordered him to be confined to his cell till such time as he would open his eyes, and see how far he had fallen because of his pride.

THE ONLY GARMENT HE POSSESSED IN DEATH.

A certain powerful ruler in the East, whose name was Saladin, lay at the point of death.

Seeing his end approaching, he commanded one of his courtiers to ride through the whole city, bearing on the point of his spear the winding-sheet which was being prepared for him, and in which he would so soon be wrapped, and at the same time to cry with a loud voice, saying : " This is all that the great Saladin, the terror of his enemies, the mighty potentate of the East, can take with him to the grave out of all the riches and treasures he possessed."

So true is it, my child, that we brought nothing into this world when we came into it, so also, when we depart out of it, we can take nothing with us. Why, then, should we be proud ? *Fulgos*, 2.

III. Covetousness.

Covetousness is the inordinate desire and love for the things of this world, and especially of wealth, and its principal effect is to destroy in our

hearts the love of God, Whom we should love above all things, and the love of our neighbour, whom we should love as we love ourselves.

TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT OF AN AVARICIOUS MAN.

The following well-known story, with its tragic end, will show you much better than many words could describe it, the heinousness of the sin of covetousness in the sight of God, and how He sometimes punishes in this world those who are slaves to this vice.

There lived long ago a man whose soul was possessed by the demon of avarice. His only thought was of the immense wealth which he possessed, and his only desire was to increase it more and more.

As he was afraid that thieves who might come to know how great his riches were might also come and steal them from him, he caused a strong room to be built deep down beneath the foundations of his castle, the door leading into it being of iron, and curiously concealed in the masonwork of the wall.

To this secret room, as often as he obtained a new supply of money, he would betake himself, and, having added it to the heap, would stand for a considerable time contemplating at his leisure the gold and the silver which he had made his god.

One day, having acquired a greater sum than usual, he hastened to the money chamber to place it along with the rest. In his haste and anxiety, he forgot to withdraw the key from the outside of the lock, and, having entered, he closed the door, that he might again contemplate at leisure the wealth he

had accumulated. When he was about to retire, he discovered, to his horror, that the door was closed against him, and that he was permanently imprisoned. It would seem that he cried out for assistance, and made every possible effort to escape ; but as no one knew of this place, and as he had taken care to build the room in the strongest and most solid manner, his screams were not heard, and his efforts to escape of no avail.

In the meantime his family was beginning to dread that some misfortune had overtaken him, as he did not appear as usual amongst them. Search was made for him on every side, but he could not be found ; inquiries were instituted, but these were equally fruitless ; and they were obliged to come to the conclusion that he had been drowned or assassinated, or that he must have perished in some terrible accident.

Some time afterwards a locksmith came to hear of what had taken place, and he remembered that many years previously he had been engaged to make a strong iron door, with a spring lock which would shut of itself when the door was closed. He thought it might be possible that the missing gentleman might be imprisoned in the solitary chamber. He at once made known his surmises, and led the family to the place where he had formerly fixed the door. The key was in the lock on the outside ; the door was opened, and, to their horror, they discovered the dead body of the man, lying with his arms extended over the heaps of gold, as if embracing in his death-struggles the god of mammon he had adored during life. His body was falling into cor-

ruption, and his nearest relatives were glad as soon as possible to hide it from their eyes by consigning it to the grave.

THE DEATH-BED OF A MISER.

A certain man who was very rich, but who had obtained his riches by unlawful means, and who had lived for this world alone, lay at the point of death. Seeing that his end was near, he sent for his lawyer and witnesses, that he might make his last will and testament before he died.

When they came in, and everything was ready, he began to dictate to them his will in these words: "I leave my body to the earth, from which it came, and I leave my soul to Satan, to whom it belongs."

When those who were present heard these words, they thought that he had lost his senses.

He knew their thoughts, and said: "No, I have not lost my senses; I know what I am saying; and now, again, I repeat the same words: I leave my body to the earth and my soul to Satan."

On hearing these terrible words repeated, they besought him to think of what he was saying, and to try to have more Christian sentiments at the moment when he was on the point of appearing before God to be judged. But the unfortunate man repeated, for the third time, the same words, adding: "I do this because during my lifetime I have served the world instead of God. More still, I leave to Satan the souls of my wife and my children, because for them I heaped up my ill-gotten wealth, that they might have fine clothes, and the means of living an idle and worldly life."

Very soon after pronouncing these awful words he expired in despair, leaving a terrible example to those who, for the sake of worldly things, sacrifice their eternal salvation.

O my child, if you desire to escape such a terrible end, love and serve God now, while you are in health.

THE RICH MAN WHO WAS UNGRATEFUL.

There was once a very rich man who was always complaining and never content. He even went so far as to say that God was not good to him.

One of the disciples of St. Francis thought he would try to show him how wrong it was in him to speak in this way ; and to convince him of it he told him the following story :

" I once saw a blind man walking on the brink of a high precipice. He did not know the danger he was in, so he fell down into the depths below. He was not killed, but his arms and legs were broken. I was very much grieved at the accident, so I ran to the place where the poor man was lying, and said to him : ' Tell me, my good man, what you would give to him who would not only heal your legs and arms, but even restore to you your sight.'

" ' Oh,' he answered, ' if anyone could do that for me, I would be happy to be his slave all the days of my life, to show him how grateful I was.'

" And you, O rich man, you have received from God the use of your eyes, and hands, and feet, and all your other faculties ; besides, He has given you many temporal goods, and yet you say that God has not been kind to you."

These words had the desired effect ; the rich man

saw how wrong it was in him to complain, since God had not only preserved him from those evils, but had given him so many other blessings.

You also, my child, have received from God many special blessings, and you have been preserved from many infirmities which others around you have to bear. How grateful, then, you should be to God for all this !

ST. ANTONINUS AND THE MESSENGER.

When we do any good work for God, we should not expect to receive any reward of a temporal nature in return. It is in Heaven that He will bestow on us an everlasting reward, and it is for this reward that we should look in all the good we do for Him or for our neighbour.

We read in the Life of St. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence in the fifteenth century, that one day there was brought to him a basket of fruit, the gift of some of his friends. When the messenger who brought it had placed it on the table before him, he stood for a little time in silence, as if expecting a remuneration for his services.

Unfortunately for him, the Saint had just given to the poor the last piece of money he possessed, and he was obliged to confine to words only his thanks to the messenger. " Thank you, my friend," he said to him ; " may God reward you !"

" May God reward you !" replied the man in a tone of great impertinence. " My lord, that is a kind of money which does not weigh heavily in one's pocket."

" My friend," said the Archbishop, " it is quite

evident to me that you do not know the value of these words; but let me tell you that they far exceed in value the basket of fruit you have brought me. God Himself will show you the truth of what I say, in order that you may have a little more faith."

Saying this, he summoned his servant, and ordered him to bring to him a pair of scales. When they were brought in, he placed in one scale the basket of fruit, and in the other a piece of paper on which was written, "May God reward you!" As soon as this was done, the scale bearing the fruit suddenly rose up and the other descended, as if a millstone had been placed in it.

At the sight of this miracle the poor man understood how he had been deceived. His faith was increased, and he no longer coveted the temporal rewards offered by the world, but sought those only which endure eternally. SCHOUPPE: *Instruct.*, ii. 333.

IV. LUST.

Lust is an irregular desire of all carnal pleasures. There are certain pleasures of the senses which are lawful, and which God has permitted the use of for our comfort in this life. Hence the Divine Providence of God has attached a pleasant attraction for the food we eat, and for the sleep we must take for the support and preservation of our bodies. And Nature itself, the creation of God, presents to our eyes objects of great beauty, and to our ears the most pleasant harmonies. These are intended to act as means of raising up our minds to God in gratitude and love.

But these legitimate pleasures cease to be such when they become inordinate—that is, when they become excessive—and are extremely dangerous, especially when they drag weak human nature towards the terrible gulf of impurity. O my child, keep a watch upon the various senses of your body, and pray earnestly that while enjoying the pleasures God has permitted, you may not be led away into those He has forbidden.

LED ASTRAY.

My dear child, as you value your eternal salvation, read and meditate on this example, for what happened to this young man might also happen to you.

In a certain town in France there lived not long ago a young man who was an example and a model of piety to everyone.

One day in the neighbourhood there was held a public demonstration, on account of some local festival. This young man was anxious, like those of his age, to go and join in the rejoicings. On ordinary occasions he was accompanied by a companion of his own age, pious and innocent as himself, but on this day he remained at home, probably on account of his fear of being led into the occasions of sins. So the youth went thither alone.

On the way he was overtaken by another young man, who was as notable for his depravity as he himself was for his attachment to the law of God. His duty evidently was to avoid his new comrade, lest he might be led by him into temptation, but this he neglected to do.

At first their conversation was about matters of

little importance, but little by little his new companion began to utter unbecoming words, and to speak with contempt of religious things; and, in the end, to propose a visit to those places where the holy virtue of purity is exposed to the most terrible dangers. The young man neglected to pray to God for help, and to turn away from the path of evil, and in a short time lost that inestimable treasure so dear to God and to His holy angels.

Not long afterwards he who had been so innocent and so pure felt his heart filled with the most poignant remorse. He had rejected his God, and now God rejected him. By a sudden and unprovided death, he was called before the dread tribunal of Jesus Christ, to be judged and to receive the sentence he merited.

The young man who had been the occasion of his fall was so overcome with his terrible and sudden end that he immediately hastened to a neighbouring monastery, and, casting himself at the feet of the Father-Abbot, besought him, with tears flowing from his eyes, to be pleased to receive him, that he might do penance for his great sin.

"O my Father," he said, "I beseech thee to have pity on a miserable wretch who has just been the cause of casting into Hell a soul created by God for Heaven. Do not, I beg of thee, cast me off, but permit me to do penance under your guidance for the rest of my life, and pray to God to have mercy on me."

He became a fervent religious, but could never smile, the remembrance of the evil he had done being continually before his eyes; and in his

humility and sorrow he would cast himself on the ground before the religious as they entered the church, and say to them: "Have pity on me, a poor wretched sinner, and pray to God for me, for I have been the cause of sending into Hell for all eternity a soul most dear to God." *Mois de Marie.*

NERO'S AWFUL DEATH.

After many years of sin and evil, Nero, the first of the great persecutors of God's Church, drew near his end. One night he saw himself unexpectedly forsaken by his guards, and this he knew was a sign of impending evil. Seeing that his ruin was imminent, he fled from his palace, and knocked at the doors of several of his friends' houses, but was refused admittance by all; whereupon, with four of his freedmen, he left the city in search of a hiding-place. The companions of his flight were obliged to conceal themselves and the Emperor in a sand-pit.

In the meantime the Senate proclaimed Galba Emperor, and declared Nero to be an enemy of the State, and condemned him to be dragged to the place of execution, and to be there publicly put to death. Nero, having been informed of this decree, was seized with despair, and stabbed himself with a sword in the throat. Immediately after this a centurion arrived, who wished to preserve his life till he should be publicly executed, and offered him assistance, which the Emperor rejected, saying: "It is now too late;" and with these words he miserably expired.

THE YOUNG MAN IN THE CEMETERY.

There was many years ago a young man who was filled with the deepest melancholy at the death of a young person with whom he had been very intimate. Nothing could console him, and very soon his health even began to give way under the severe strain which affected his mind.

One of his companions, observing this, and knowing well the cause of it, thought of a means, severe, indeed, in itself, but one he hoped would prove effective ; for, being pious himself, he desired to bring his friend back again to the path of virtue, from which he had strayed.

He asked him to accompany him to the cemetery, and, going to the grave wherein the remains of the young person had been interred, he opened it, as well as the coffin it contained. The smell which arose from the putrefied remains was so unbearable that the young man turned away and fled.

"Why do you run away?" said the virtuous young man. "Of what are you afraid? Come and behold the countenance of her whom you once thought so beautiful, and which made you forget one of God's greatest commandments—one who now weeps in the other life for the momentary pleasures of this wicked world. Come and gaze upon her now, and learn what a sad and bitter thing it is to have forsaken the Lord thy God, and to have chosen instead those works of evil which are abhorrent to the children of God."

This lesson, severe though it was, had the desired

effect. The young man repented of his past sins, entered once more on the way of virtue, and lived and died as the saints do.

HAUTRIEVE: *Catéch. de la Persévér.*, viii. 661.

V. ANGER.

Anger is an inordinate movement of the soul, which causes us to reject with violence and impetuosity whatever displeases us.

THE HERMIT AND THE WATER-JUG.

In the "Lives of the Fathers of the Desert" we read that one of the brethren of a certain monastery was much inclined to anger, so that whenever he received the least provocation from any of the religious he at once burst forth into anger against him, and said many reproachful words.

One day, when he had been more angry than usual, he said to himself, when calm had returned: "I must leave this house, where there are so many monks, and go to live in a desert, where I shall be alone, and where there will be no one to make me angry."

He therefore left the monastery and went into a solitary place, where he built for himself a little cell. Here for a short time he lived very happily, because there was no one to make him angry.

It happened on a certain day that he went to a spring in the neighbourhood to draw water. When he filled the water-jug with water, he placed it on the side of the spring; but as the ground was uneven, the jug fell over and the water ran out. He

filled it a second time, but this time also it fell, and the water ran out as before. A third time he filled it, but the result was the same.

Upon seeing this, the religious became exceedingly angry, and, taking up a stone, threw it at the vessel, and broke it to pieces.

After the anger had passed away, he began to think on what he had done. "The Devil has deceived me," he said, "in making me think that I could overcome this sin of anger by flying from the society of men. It is a vice that I carry with me wherever I go, and in every place, even in the solitude of the desert, there are occasions on which it will burst forth, if not checked. Instead of trying to escape from it, as I did, I ought to have prayed to God for the grace to overcome it, and I should have received it. I shall at once return to the monastery which I left, and will fight against this enemy till I shall have overcome it."

He went back to the monastery as he resolved to do, and made so much progress that in a short time there was not one among the brethren so patient and meek as he was. *Fathers of the Desert.*

ST. GENEVIEVE'S MOTHER PUNISHED.

Gerontia, the mother of St. Genevieve, although very pious, was not a Saint. The long prayers and devotions of her daughter did not always please her. She thought she spent too much time in prayer.

One day—it was some great festival day—Genevieve was preparing as usual to go to hear Mass. Her mother said to her: "Genevieve, I am

going to the church to-day, so you must stay at home."

"O mother, let me also go," said the child. "I can easily go along with you."

"No; you must stay at home to-day."

"But, dear mother, don't you remember how I promised the holy Bishop Germanus that I would always be good and please God all my lifetime? and I want to keep my promise."

"Don't contradict me in that way!" said the mother, getting angry. "You must stay at home; that's my order."

Tears came into the eyes of the little girl, and she sobbed out once more: "O dear mother, *do* let me go with you—do let me go!"

Her mother had now become very angry, and, raising her hand, struck the girl on the face.

But God saw what she had done, and, to show how displeased He was, He, on the spot, struck her with blindness, and for the following eighteen months she could not see. After that time Gerontia happened to remember the words which the holy Bishop St. Germanus had said about her child, and immediately she was filled with sorrow for what she had done to her.

Calling her to her side, she said to her: "Genevieve, dearest, take the pitcher and go to the well for water."

The child immediately obeyed, and as she was sitting at the side of the well, waiting until the pitcher should be filled, she began to think of the affliction under which her dear mother was suffering. "It is by my fault," she said—"it is by my fault

that mother is blind;" and the tears flowed from her eyes down her cheeks, and mingled themselves with the water at her feet.

When she brought the water home, her mother said to her: "Genevieve, my dearest child, make the sign of the Cross over the water."

The child did so.

Then, taking the water which the child had blessed, she washed her eyes three times with it, and at the third time her eyes were again opened, and she was restored to sight.

This great miracle caused her mother and her father also to allow her as much time for her devotions as she pleased, and she again renewed her resolution to consecrate herself entirely to God for the remainder of her life.

God may not punish you, my child, as He punished Gerontia, yet be assured that He hears and sees everything, and will punish every angry word or action in His own good time.

VI. Gluttony.

By gluttony is meant an inordinate desire or use of meat and drink.

THE WIFE OF THE DUKE OF VENICE.

St. Peter Damian relates that the wife of one of the Dukes of Venice, who belonged to Constantinople, lived in such a delicate manner that she would not even wash herself in common water, but required her maids to go forth early in the morning,

and to collect with much trouble sufficient of the dew which was upon the grass for her morning bath.

She would never touch the food, placed on magnificent dishes on the table, with her fingers, but made use of gold and silver forks and spoons to convey it to her lips, previously anointed with precious and odoriferous unguents. Her bed-chamber emitted the odour of sweet-smelling herbs, and her apartments gave forth a smell of exquisite perfumes, and in the midst of this luxury she lived for many years.

But God, for our instruction, was pleased, even in this world, to punish her for her unmortified life. Her health, formerly robust, began to give way, and the members of her body soon showed signs of decay. The room in which she reposed became so pregnated with the stench which issued from the sores of her body that her attendants could not remain near her. One only remained to perform the duties absolutely necessary in the awful condition to which she was reduced ; but only when protected by the application of powerful antidotes, and for a few moments at a time. Finally she also was compelled to desert her.

The poor woman, thus left alone, and enduring the most excruciating torments, forsaken by all, even her most intimate friends, died a miserable death, to begin, it may be feared, in eternity a death without end, a fit punishment for such an unworthy sensual life. *St. Peter Damian*, lib., vii., ep. ix.

THEODORUS FORSAKES THE WORLD FOR GOD.

Theodorus, who afterwards became a renowned disciple of the great Abbot Pachomius, was born of parents who occupied a high position in the world, and possessed great wealth.

One day, when he was only fourteen years of age, his father prepared a great feast in his palace, to which, as he was frequently accustomed to do, he invited those in the neighbourhood who occupied a position in society similar to his own.

During the progress of the feast, while sitting at table with the many invited guests, he began to think of the luxurious manner in which until that time he had been so delicately brought up, and the wealth and pleasures which were within his grasp; and while meditating upon these things, he thus communed with himself: "Oh, how miserable will be my fate in eternity if, for the sake of these perishable things I must so soon leave for ever, I should be for all eternity deprived of the joys of Heaven, which surpass all understanding! Has not Jesus Christ told us that we cannot possess the goods of Heaven if we place our hearts on the enjoyment of those of earth?"

Overcome with these thoughts, and being resolved at all costs to secure the salvation of his soul, he quietly rose from table, and, retiring into an unfrequented part of the palace, besought Our Lord, with many tears, to make known to him His Holy Will.

From that day he resolved to renounce all those pleasures so eagerly sought after by people of the

world, and lead in his father's house the life of a hermit. Not long afterwards he renounced all the worldly possessions to which he was heir, and enrolled himself in the congregation of the disciples of St. Pachomius, among whom he soon began to shine by the lustre of his sanctity, the fervour of his life, and his love of self-mortification.

Jer. Pac. de bon. Stat. cœli., lib. i., c. xv.

ROLANDUS ON A DAY OF GREAT FESTIVITY.

A certain young man whose name was Rolandus was one day present at a great festivity, and took part with great pleasure in the worldly joys which accompanied it. The well-spread table, the dances, and the games which accompanied them, left him nothing more to desire.

But when evening came and he began to consider by himself how he had spent the day, he mused thus : " Alas, the feast is now over, and the day that was so full of pleasure and joy is gone for ever ; and what benefit do I receive from it all ? None—only fatigue and remorse ; and if I spent all the days of my life in a similar manner, what would it avail me for the eternity for which alone I was created ?"

On the following day he resolved to renounce the world and all its fleeting pleasures, and enter the Order of St. Dominic. *Plautus*, lib. ii., c. *ult.*

A DAUGHTER'S HEROIC SACRIFICE REWARDED.

Amongst the many sacrifices one can offer to God, there is not one that costs so much to human nature as the mortification of our appetite in eating and drinking. It has always been the one chosen by the

Saints to move God to show them mercy, and one that has brought down from Heaven innumerable spiritual blessings.

One day a priest, in his instructions to the children, said these words : " My children, if you would desire to convert a whole family to God, bring into the midst of them one who knows how to suffer. If you desire to bring back to God one who is dear to you, suffer for that soul."

It happened that one of those who heard these words was a little girl who had lately made her First Communion. She not only heard them, but understood what they meant. The pious child had often seen sad tears flowing down her mother's cheeks, and she herself was full of sadness when she saw her father, whom she loved so much, return home night after night in a state of intoxication.

On that day, as soon as she came home when the instructions were ended, she threw herself into the arms of her mother, saying : " Dearest mother, do not weep any more. Papa will soon be good again."

She said no more, and would not answer the questions when her mother asked her for an explanation of what she meant.

Next day at dinner-time, when all the family were seated at table, the girl partook of a little soup, with a small piece of bread, but would not accept anything else.

" Are you unwell, my child ?" asked the mother.

" No, mother ; I am quite well."

" Take your dinner, then," said the father in an angry tone.

" Not to-day, father."

Her parents imagined that this all arose from childish caprice, and thought that they would punish her by allowing her to have her own way.

That evening her father came as usual, after spending his time and means with his companions in the public inn.

The girl had retired to rest, but was not asleep, and she heard the words of blasphemy he was accustomed to utter. On hearing them she shed bitter tears.

Next day at dinner she refused to partake of anything but a morsel of bread and a cup of water.

The mother, seeing this, became very much distressed. Her father became angry. "You must eat your dinner," he cried out; "I command you."

"No, father," replied the courageous child. "As long as you give way to intemperance, and make my mother weep, and offend God by the blasphemous words you utter, I will not eat nor drink of anything, but continue to live as you have seen me do. I made a promise to God that I would suffer something in order that He might not have to punish you."

The guilty father hung down his head, and did not reply. When evening came he returned home sober, and the child was happy, and ate joyfully of the food which was upon the table.

But as the days passed on the terrible demon of intemperance returned, and the father yielded as before. The child soon perceived this, and once more resumed her self-imposed penance. Her father saw it, but said nothing. It was by actions, not by words, he was now to show the sincerity of

his conversion. He began to weep. His wife also wept. The child alone was calm.

Rising up, he took his little girl into his manly arms and embraced her tenderly.

" My little martyr !" he exclaimed, " how long are you going to live in this way ?"

" My father, I will do so till I die or until you are converted."

" Enough, my child ! Your mother shall never have to weep again. You have conquered."

This time he kept his word.

L'Apostolat de la Prière, p. 48.

VII. Envy.

Envy is a sadness or repining at another's good, because it seems to lessen our own.

" she is a great hypocrite," they said.

At this time Genevieve was about fifteen years old. Not content with the sufferings God sent her, she of her own accord daily added other mortifications and penances. She fasted most rigorously, and prayed most fervently, not for a few hours, but for weeks and months ; in a word, she seemed always to be speaking to God. People soon came to know about her holy life, and wondered how it was possible that one so young and so weak could do so much for God. They were all edified by her beautiful example, and were excited by it to try and do more than they were doing for the world to come.

But Satan was very angry at this piety of Genevieve. He saw how much harm it was doing to

his evil cause, and he determined, if possible, to turn public opinion against her. He put it into the hearts of some people, who were full of envy, to think that all this fervour of Genevieve was only a pretence.

"She is a great hypocrite," they said. "She pretends to be so good and so holy, but she is just like other people, or even worse, for she pretends to be what she is not."

These words had the desired effect. The people who till then had been loudest in her praise now turned against her, and this new cross must have been heavier to her than all the rest.

It happened just at this time that St. Germanus had to go again into Britain, for the heresy which he had gone there to destroy had broken out a second time. This time also he passed through Paris. The people went out, as they had done before, to welcome him and to receive his blessing.

"How is my dear child Genevieve?" was the first question he asked them. "Is she well, and is she leading a holy life?"

Some of her enemies, who were among the chief men of the city, answered him that Genevieve was not at all what she ought to be; that she indeed outwardly performed some practices of piety, but that her inward life was very far from corresponding with this outward show of devotion—in a word, that everyone looked on her as a hypocrite.

The holy man saw at once the malice which lay under these words, and, being enlightened at the same time by the Holy Spirit, he knew envy was the cause of all they had told him.

"No," he said; "what you say of that child is

false, for she is as holy in her inmost soul as she appears to be in the eyes of the world."

Then he severely rebuked them for their want of charity, so that the people who had been deceived by what they had heard from these men at once repented, and began to praise her and extol her virtues.

When St. Germanus entered the city, he said to those around him : " Where does Genevieve dwell ?"

And when they led him to the place, the holy Bishop saluted her very reverently, as one already dear to God, and, in the hearing of all the people, spoke in praise of her virtue.

The poor child wept when she saw herself thus the object of praise. But God, Who protects those who love Him, preserved her humility from being tarnished, and at the same time vindicated His beloved child from the calumnies which evil men had invented against her.

When this had been done, St. Germanus proceeded on his way to England.

THE POISONED CUP.

One day some of the religious who had placed themselves under the guidance of St. Benedict, and who had fallen away from their first fervour, resolved among themselves, through envy, to bring about his death secretly by poison, because he desired to make them return to the strict observance of the monastic rule, and because his life was a constant rebuke to their sinful negligence.

When the hour of dinner arrived, they placed near him a glass of wine into which they had in-

fused the deadly draught. St. Benedict, according to his custom, made over it the sign of the Cross previous to his partaking of it. At the same moment the glass in his hand was broken into fragments. It was in this way God made known to him the evil designs of those impious men, and delivered him from the death to which their envy had condemned him. *Life of St. Benedict.*

VIII. Sloth.

Sloth is a laziness of mind, neglecting to begin or prosecute good things.

THE MAN OF THE WORLD JUDGED.

In the book of the " Revelations of St. Bridget " we read :

" And God said " (speaking of the soul who stood at the Judgment Seat, about to be judged) : " ' That soul does not belong to Me. The wound in My heart and the sorrows of My soul did no more affect him than if he had been looking at the transpiercing of the shield of an enemy ; the wounds in My hands no more touched him than if he had seen some precious vase broken ; and the wounds in My feet made no more impression on him than if he had seen an apple cut in two.'

" Then the Lord said to that soul : ' When you were in the world, you often asked yourself in your heart why I died on the Cross. I now ask you, why, O poor soul ! why you have died as you did.'

" The soul answered : ' I have thus died because I did not love You.'

" Then the Lord said : ' You were in My sight like unto a child which is dead before it has seen the light of the world. I purchased you at a great price, even that of all My precious blood, even as I redeemed all My Saints, but that availed you but little. You can never enjoy the felicity of the Saints, because on earth you preferred the society of sinners rather than to sanctify yourself with the Saints. With regard to piety and virtue, you were as cold as ice ; therefore it is only just that you should not have had any share in My blessings and My graces. You did not wish to live in the light of My grace, so now you must go for ever into exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

" This man, when on earth, occupied a prominent position among men, but during all his lifetime had lived as if there was no world to come, or no God to judge him, and he died an unprovided death, without the Sacraments of the Church.

" The Judge again said to him : ' You were accustomed on earth to do whatever you chose, and you used to speak without taking heed to what you said. But now in silence and trembling you must listen to the sentence of your condemnation. Have you not often heard those words of the Gospel : " I do not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live " ? Why, then, did you not turn away from evil when it was in your power ?'

" The soul answered : ' When I heard these words, I either did not heed them or persuaded myself that they were not true.'

" The Judge then said : ' Did you not know that I am just, eternal, almighty, and a Judge of severity to men after death ? Why, then, did you not fear this judgment ?"

" The soul answered : ' I had often heard this spoken of, but I paid little or no attention to it. I loved myself and my comforts more than I feared God and His judgments ; therefore I shut my ears and hardened my heart against these words of truth.'

" When that soul had received its sentence of condemnation, it broke forth into lamentations, and uttered cries of despair, saying : ' Alas ! alas ! when shall this terrible punishment end ?'

" And a voice answered : ' Your punishment will continue as long as God is God—that is, for ever and for ever. It will never end.' "

St. Bridget's Revelations.

THE TRAVELLER AND THE TWO ROADS.

St. Bridget tells us the following story : One day a traveller, being on his journey, came to a place where there were two roads, one or other of which he was obliged to take. One of these roads was level and pleasant, and the other was steep and rough. But he was told that the one that was so pleasant and level would lead him to a precipice, where he would be sure to lose his life, whereas the other, which was so steep, would lead him to a place where he would find all he could desire of joy and happiness.

When he had examined these two roads, the traveller took the one that seemed to him to be the easiest to walk upon, although he knew at the same time that it would lead him to a terrible end. He

had once heard it said that at a certain spot on this road there was a little side path which led on to the other one, so he said to himself : " I can go along this road with great security till I come to this little path ; then I will at once ascend to the other road, and thus I will be able to escape falling over the terrible precipice which is at the end of it."

So he began to walk on the pleasant road ; but before he was aware he fell over the precipice and was killed. He had been so much taken up with the pleasures of the road that he had forgotten to keep a lookout for the little by-path, and had passed it by.

" It is in the same way," said the Saint, " that many people of our own time act. No one wants to be lost in Hell for all eternity ; still, they would, if possible, walk on the plain road, because they do not wish to renounce the pleasures of life. Hence they frame an excuse for themselves by saying that God is good, and that He has established the Sacrament of Penance, by which, as soon as the sinner repents, all his sins are at once blotted out, and they hope that before they die God will forgive them, and that thus they will, after all, reach Heaven, even after a life of sin. ' Our life is long,' they say, ' and the mercy of God is very great. We will enjoy the present life, and towards the end of our days we will return to God by a good Confession, and thus reach Heaven.' These people for the most part deceive themselves ; for God is just as well as merciful, and He will not grant the Kingdom of Heaven to those who have thus shown themselves so unworthy of it."

LV

THE CONTRARY VIRTUES

I. Humility.

As Pride, my child, is the root of all evil, so Humility is the foundation of all virtue. The Saints call it an interior light which makes known to the soul how incapable it is of itself to do any good for God and Heaven; also an acknowledgment that whatever good may be in us, or may be done by us, is the effect of God's grace, and that it is, as it were, a veil that hides from us the good we may have done for God.

OUR LADY AND THE ANGEL.

When the Angel Gabriël came down from Heaven to Mary, to tell her that the Eternal Son of God had chosen her to be His Mother, she was filled with fear, for she saw how great He was, and how unworthy she was of such an honour.

But the angel said to her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus."

And when the angel had finished his message, Mary, still mindful of her littleness, though chosen

for so great a dignity, answered: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord! be it done to me according to Thy word." Then Jesus came down from Heaven and took up His abode within her.

THE HUMILITY OF JESUS AND MARY IN THE TEMPLE.

We read in the holy Gospel of St. Luke, after the narration of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, that Our Lady fulfilled all the things that were prescribed by the law. St. Vincent Ferrer writes as follows on this pious subject:

"There was a custom in the Temple," he says—"and this custom at the present day exists among the Jews—that there was a place in the Temple set aside for noble and rich women, to come thither and present their children, and another for those who were of a humbler condition, besides the third, which was entirely reserved for the virgins who were spending their early years in the House of God.

"On entering the Temple, Our Lady looked from one group to the other, considering to which one she would attach herself. On the one hand, she belonged to the highest family in the land, being the direct descendant of David; but she was poor and simply attired, for she had already bestowed upon the needy all the riches she had received from the wise men, as she desired in her humility to possess nothing but what she procured by the work of her hands. She thought, therefore, that if she sat amidst those who were endowed with the splendours of the world, they would say to her: 'Go to the

place which your poverty assigns you. What! the wife of a common workman to presume to sit amongst the noble ones of Israel!'

"She had the right to place herself among those virgins who were consecrated to God, because she was the most excellent of them all. But then these would have said: 'How can you dare to place yourself amongst us, seeing that you have a husband and child?'

"She went, therefore, and sat down among the poor, whom the world has always despised. Then was fulfilled the prophecy of the Book of Canticles: 'As the lily among the thorns, so is my Beloved amongst the daughters of Israel.'

"Then she gave to the world a second proof of her humility by kneeling at the feet of the priest, and making the offering which the law ordained, saying: 'Behold my oblation, and offer for me a sacrifice unto God, that He may purify me from my sins.' The priest received her offering, gave her his benediction, and then she retired.

"She then offered him before her departure two turtle-doves and two young pigeons, asking him to pray for her. Oh, what profound humility!" exclaims the Saint in meditating on this mystery. "The most holy one of all God's creation beseeches a sinner to pray for her! The priest knew not who she was; but the prophet Isaias knew her, when he prophesied of her: 'Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son, and His name shall be Emmanuel.'"

My child, since the virtue of humility was so dear to Our Lady, and so much recommended by her

beloved Son Jesus, the more you endeavour to practise it, the more dear you will become to them.

Medit. of St. Vincent Ferrer.

HUMILITY AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE SAINTS.

St. Augustine thus spoke of humility : " Humility is the foundation of all other virtues ; there is no virtue more powerful than this one for obtaining God's choicest favours."

It was this virtue of humility that the youthful St. Aloysius endeavoured to gain with all the eagerness of his soul. Every day he prayed with fervour to the holy angels to obtain it for him by their intercession, since it had been for them the cause of their victory on the day of trial, and of their present glory and happiness in the Kingdom of Heaven.

A certain holy religious was often heard to say : " I would willingly and with the greatest pleasure give my two eyes to acquire true humility."

St. Thomas of Villanova often said these words : " Humility is the mother of many virtues : of it are born obedience, the fear of God, patience, modesty, and peace."

St. Jane Frances de Chantal had so great a love for humility that she watched with the greatest attention never to allow to pass by any opportunity of practising that virtue. Writing to St. Francis de Sales on one occasion, she used these words : " O my dearest Father, I beg of you, for the love of God, to help me to humble myself daily more and more !"

St. Francis of Paul continually inculcated

humility. " The most powerful weapon for overcoming Satan is humility," he said.

St. Teresa could not understand why priests used to speak so frequently on the necessity of being humble. " Is it not quite evident," she used to say, " that no one can attribute to himself any good he may do ? For without the help of God what good could anyone perform ? How can people be so proud as to think of any little good they may have done, since they are so full of every kind of evil dispositions, and since they have committed so many sins against God ? Even if I should desire to draw to myself vanity from any good I may have performed solely by the help of God, how in justice could I do it ?"

St. Dominic had the custom of casting himself on his knees before the gate of any town in which he went to preach, to beg of Our Lord not to visit the people with any affliction on account of his sins.

St. Philip Neri advised all those whom he directed in Confession to say to themselves, when they had fallen into any fault : " Had I only been humble, I never would have committed this sin."

When the holy penitent Thais had been converted from her sinful life, she would continually call to mind the evil she had committed by her own fault in the days when she had fallen away from the path of virtue. She would, in her humility, consider herself unworthy of even uttering the Holy Name of God, and her great prayer was in these words : " O Thou Who hast created me, have mercy on me."

St. Teresa, again, used to say : " One single day in which a person humbles himself profoundly before God on account of his sins and his own natural weakness brings more grace into his soul than if he had spent many days in prayer."

" I know what I will do to appease the anger of my God against me on account of my sins," said St. Bonaventure ; " I will consider myself to be the greatest sinner upon the face of the earth ; I will look upon myself as an object of contempt, and when I see myself looked down upon, despised, covered with insults and opprobrium, I will be glad and rejoice, and I will bless the Lord for granting me so great a grace."

St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was convinced in her own heart that she was of all creatures whom God had made the most miserable. Her great humility made her exaggerate her little faults, that people might have a more contemptuous opinion concerning her. It was the greatest torment for this humble soul to see herself esteemed, or to hear herself praised, and she appeared to be covered with confusion when she was unable to hide from the knowledge of others the many favours and marks of the love of God, Who had for her a special predilection.

St. Bonaventure often said : " Be full of contempt for yourself in your own eyes, on account of your negligences in corresponding with the graces offered you by God, and be glad when others contemn you. Do not boast of the favours you have received from God, but remember that it is God Who has given them to you."

St. Bernard, speaking of humility, said : " To be great in the eyes of God by the practice of virtues, and at the same time to appear contemptible in our own eyes, is that humility which is most agreeable to God, but which, alas ! is so seldom to be found amongst men."

Heureuse Année.

LITTLE WENDELIN AND THE TOAD.

It was a beautiful evening in the summer-time. Little Wendelin was herding his father's sheep in the meadows. He was weeping, and there was a sad expression on his face.

" What ails you, my child ?" said a kind old man who came near him.

" Oh, sir, " he said, " I have seen such an ugly toad, jumping about in the pool down there."

" Why does the sight of a toad make you cry, my boy ?"

" Sir," the child answered, " when I saw the toad, I said to myself : ' Oh, what an ugly beast ! See how it drags itself along the ground ; it knows nothing about God Who made it ; and for the most part of its life it lives in mud-holes, and in the end dies in a dark corner, unknown to everyone. How different am I from that vile beast ! God has given me a beautiful body, and I can walk upright, and I can look up to Heaven, and I can enjoy the sight of the trees and the flowers. Moreover, He has given me a soul, by which I can know and love Him, and, instead of doing so, I, like this toad, wallow in the mire of the world. Oh, how ungrateful I have been !' Have I not, therefore, reason to weep ?"

With much more reason, my child, might you weep, who have done so much to offend God. This thought should make you very humble indeed.

ST. VINCENT OF PAUL AND HIS NEPHEW.

One day St. Vincent was in his room. At this time he was considered to be one of the greatest men in Paris. Everyone had heard of him, and it was esteemed a great honour for one to be able to say that he had spoken to the great Vincent.

On this day the servant came into his room. "Please, reverend Father," he said, "there is a poor, ragged man from the country at the door who wants to see you; he says he is your nephew."

St. Vincent felt these words most keenly. That a poor man should come and claim kindred with him, who was so well known throughout the whole city, and even at the Court of the King himself, was certainly disagreeable to human nature.

So he said to the servant: "Go down and speak to him, and give him whatever he needs." But immediately detecting the motive which made him say these words, and that it arose from pride, he overcame himself on the spot.

In an instant he rose to his feet and went down to the street, where his nephew was standing. As soon as he saw him, he ran towards him and embraced him with the greatest joy; then, taking him by the hand, he led him into the house and, ill-dressed as he was, introduced him to all his household, and all the priests who came to call upon him, saying to them that he was the best among all his relations.

He did even more than this ; for it happened that at the same time he received the visit of some people of high dignity, who came for the express purpose of having the honour of speaking to him. The first thing St. Vincent did after receiving their salutations was to introduce his poor, ill-clad, poverty-stricken nephew, and to tell them that he was proud to claim kindred with one who was so good and so poor.

Thus he gained the victory over the enemy of pride that had sought to gain an entrance into his holy soul. But as God always exalts those who humble themselves, so did He exalt St. Vincent. The more he tried to speak of his humble origin, the more did the people who heard him admire his great humility, and become more and more convinced of his great sanctity.

ST. VINCENT OF PAUL IN THE COUNCIL-CHAMBER.

One day the Archbishop of Paris held a council in his palace, which was attended by all the principal clergy of his diocese. St. Vincent was present among them.

Now it happened that the Archbishop had confided to the Saint a very important work, for he had great confidence in his prudence and wisdom. But someone had gone to the prelate, and told him that Vincent had neglected this work, or that he had not done it with the care and diligence that it required.

As soon, therefore, as the Archbishop saw Vincent standing in his place among the other clergy, he reprimadend him in very harsh words before the

whole assembly. Vincent could easily by a few words have justified himself, but he saw this was a good opportunity for the exercise of humility, so he made no answer. On the contrary, although he was a man at that time fifty years old, he went on his knees like a little child, and publicly begged his Superior's pardon for a fault of which he knew himself to be innocent.

The rest of the priests were surprised when they saw him do this, because they thought it to be an acknowledgment that he was really guilty, and they were astonished that one so good as Vincent was thought to be, should have been so careless in any works confided to him. But at the same time they were greatly edified by his humility in thus publicly asking pardon for it.

Not long afterwards it became known that he had not only performed the work which had been given to him, but had done so with the greatest perfection. Then those who had witnessed his humility, in asking pardon just as if he had been at fault, were now filled with the highest admiration. One of them, on hearing of it, cried out: "That man is indeed a great Saint."

VANITY OVERCOME; OR, THE PAINTER-MONK.

The name of Rubens, one of the greatest painters of the days in which he lived, is also well known to every lover of that noble art even in our own days.

It happened that he went to visit a monastery of one of the austere Orders of the Church, and he saw in the humble sanctuary of that still more humble church a picture which appeared to him to

be the greatest work of art he had ever seen. It represented the death of a monk. Rubens pointed it out to several of his pupils who accompanied him, who all joined with him in expressing their admiration at it.

"Who could have been the painter of this picture?" said Van Dyck, the favourite pupil of Rubens.

"His name had been written at the foot of the painting," said another, "but it is now entirely effaced."

Rubens then sent for the Prior, and asked him who the artist was who had painted such a magnificent picture.

"The painter is no longer of this world," he replied.

"Dead!" exclaimed Rubens—"dead, and no one has till now ever heard of him; no one has handed down his name, which ought to be immortal—his name, which might have even greater renown than my own! And yet," added the artist, with a noble pride, yet, my Father, I am Peter Paul Rubens."

When he had uttered these words, the pale face of the Prior began to assume a brilliant hue; his eyes sparkled, and he fixed his eyes on Rubens, not with curiosity only, but with a feeling of natural pride. But this was only for a moment. The monk cast his eyes upon the ground, crossed his arms on his breast—those arms which during the moment of enthusiasm he had raised heavenwards—and he repeated the words he had hitherto used: "The artist is no longer of this world."

"His name, his name, my Father—what is his

name ? I must make it known to the world, and give honour to whom honour is due."

And all the others present united their voices to his, asking him to tell them who was the painter of the picture.

The monk was troubled. A cold sweat issued from his forehead and trickled down his emaciated cheeks ; his lips were convulsively pressed together, as he was tempted to reveal the mystery, the secret of which he possessed.

" His name, his name !" repeated Rubens.

The monk made a solemn gesture with his hand. " Hear me," he said ; " you have not properly understood me. I said to you that the author of this painting was no longer of the world, but I did not say that he was dead."

" He lives, then—he lives !" ejaculated Rubens. " Oh, tell us where he is, that we may go and find him."

" He has renounced all worldly things," replied the Prior. " He dwells in the cloister ; he is a monk."

" A monk, my Father, a monk ! Oh, tell me in what monastery he lives, for he must leave it. When God marks a man with the seal of genius, that man must not go and hide himself from the world. God has given such a one a sublime mission on earth, and it is his duty to accomplish it. Tell me the name of the cloister where he has hid himself, and I myself will go and take him hence, and I will show him what glory awaits him. If he refuses to accompany me, I will tell him that I will go to our Holy Father the Pope, and ask him to order him to go back again into the world. Yes, my Father, I will

go to the Pope himself, and the Pope will grant my request."

The monk answered in a determined tone: "I will not tell you his name, nor the place where he is to be found."

"But the Pope will order you to do this," said Rubens.

"Hear me," said the monk—"in God's Name, hear me! Do you imagine that that man, before leaving the world, before renouncing the fortune and the glory he could so easily have gained, had not to fight bravely against a great temptation? Do you believe that he had not been pressed by bitter suggestions and by a cruel agony of mind, before he was able to throw all this human glory at his feet, and, striking his breast, to acknowledge that all was vanity? Leave him, then, to die in the home he has chosen in his earthly pilgrimage in this deceitful world. Besides this, all your efforts would be without avail. It is a temptation which he would overcome," added he, in making on himself the sign of the Cross, "for God will not deprive him of His assistance in that his day of need. God, Who in His goodness has called him in this world to serve Him alone, will not cast him from His presence."

"But, my Father," continued Rubens, "it is an immortal name he sacrifices."

"An immortal name is nothing," answered the monk, "when compared with eternity." And the monk, covering his head to hide his countenance, immediately changed the conversation, so that Rubens could not return to the subject.

The celebrated artist left the monastery along with his pupils, and returned to Madrid, silent and sorrowful. The Prior went back to his cell, and, kneeling on the mat which served as his bed, raised up a fervent prayer to God. Then he gathered together all his painting materials and his easel, and threw them into the river which ran beneath the window of his cell.

For a little time he gazed sadly on them, as he saw them sink in the water or carried away by the stream, and when they had all disappeared, he returned to his prayer on the mat of straw before his Crucifix.

L. VEUILLOT.

II. LIBERALITY.

Liberality consists in taking off our hearts from the love and the desire of the perishable things of this world, to use them as if we possessed them not, and only for the purpose for which God gave them.

MY LORDS AND MASTERS.

When St. John the Almsgiver, so named on account of his liberality, became patriarch of Alexandria, he called together the treasurers of his Church, and said to them : " Go into the city and write down in a book the names of all my lords and masters, from the first to the last. Take care not to leave out even one of them."

On hearing these words, they, in astonishment, asked him whom he meant.

" They are those whom you call the poor," he answered.

They inscribed more than seven thousand names. St. John then gave orders that every day they should all receive a little, each according to his needs. *From his Life.*

A HUNDREDFOLD REWARD.

A certain man called Evagrius heard a holy Bishop preaching a sermon on the promise that Jesus made—viz., to give a hundredfold reward in Heaven to those who do good on earth.

When the sermon was over, he went to the Bishop and gave him sixty pounds in gold that he might distribute it among the poor. The Bishop took the money, and in return gave him a letter, in which he wrote down the words of the promise Jesus Christ had made.

He told his children to put this letter into his hands when he was dead, and bury it along with him.

Three days after his death Evagrius appeared to the Bishop, and asked him to go to his grave and take back the letter, as he had already received from Jesus Christ the promised hundredfold reward.

Next morning the Bishop, with his clergy, went to the grave and took from the hands of the dead man the letter which had been placed in them. When he opened it, he read the following words: "Evagrius to the Bishop—I did not wish you to remain ignorant of what has happened to me. God has indeed already given me a hundredfold reward for all the money I gave you. You do not owe me anything now."

O my dear child, follow this counsel, and you shall persevere to the end and gain that same hundredfold reward in Heaven.

III. Chastity.

Chastity is that virtue which is contrary to Lust, and consists in the observance of purity in the state of life to which God has called us, whether it be the state of virginity, or that which, in the providence of God, is the most ordinary state of life which He has appointed for His children—the state of Christian marriage.

There is nothing in this world so pleasing to God, my child, as the chaste soul, and it should be your constant desire to preserve it intact, that when you come to the end of your life you may be among the clean of heart who shall see God.

St. Catherine's words about a pure soul.

St. Catherine was asked by her Confessor to describe the beauty of a soul she had seen in the state of grace.

"Ah!" she replied, "the beauty and the brightness of such a soul is so great that were you to behold it you would be willing to endure all possible pains and sufferings for its sake."

We need not be surprised, therefore, when we read how the angels sometimes came down from Heaven to associate with those Saints on earth whose souls were pure and innocent. Nor can we any longer wonder when we hear that sometimes even the faces of those who love God, and especially

those who frequently receive Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, shine with the happiness with which their souls are filled.

ST. MAURUS AND THE SERPENT.

St. Maurus was one day carrying St. Benedict his dinner. On his way the good, simple boy found a large serpent. He took it up, and, putting it in the fold of his cloak, brought it to St. Benedict, saying : " See, Father, what I have found."

When the holy Abbot and all the monks were assembled, the serpent began to hiss, and tried to bite them. Then St. Benedict said : " My child, go back and put it where you found it."

And when St. Maurus was gone, he turned to those who accompanied him and said : " My brethren, do you know why that animal is so gentle with that child ? It is because he has never lost his baptismal innocence."

A MIRROR FOR CHASTE SOULS.

Cornelius a Lapide thus comments on the chastity of Rebecca, whom God had chosen to be the spouse of Abraham, and the mother of His chosen people of Israel :

" Rebecca," he writes, " was never idle ; on the contrary, the Scripture narrates how diligently she accomplished the duties of her household, ever going to the well for the water required for her home. And when she had filled the pitcher she returned at once to the precincts of her house, without allowing her eyes to wander as she passed

through the open fields ; and although she saw the servant whom Abraham had sent into that country to find a suitable wife for his son Isaac, she did not speak to him. It was only when he had asked her to give him to drink that she arrested her steps and spoke to him with modesty and delicate reserve. And although she discovered that he was the envoy of Abraham, she did not presume to conduct him into her parents' house, but went thither alone to apprise them of his arrival. Neither did she seek to discover immediately the cause of his coming. It was only when her parents desired her to consent to her union with Isaac that she modestly complied with their request. Her memory was held in benediction from generation to generation among the Jews, who ever looked on her as a model of chastity, not only in the years of her virginity, but also when, as a wife and mother, she faithfully accomplished the duties of that state of life."

IV. Meekness.

Meekness, my child, is that virtue which keeps in subjection the emotions of anger which so often arise within us, and inspires us with sentiments of peace. It keeps the soul calm and tranquil ; it makes us act towards our neighbour with sympathy and kindness, and banishes all harshness from our words and actions.

MEEK AND HUMBLE OF HEART.

When Our Lord Jesus Christ was as yet a little child, He was so gentle and meek that the Jewish

boys used to call Him " the sweet Child "; and they would say, the one to the other : " Let us go and see the little sweet Boy, that we may become joyful."

And in after-years the evangelists tell us that when He was reviled, He did not revile ; that when He suffered, He threatened not, but delivered Himself up to him who judged Him unjustly ; and that as a lamb before the shearer He was silent, and opened not His mouth.

Hence He was able to place His own example before us for our imitation, saying : " Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart."

And St. Bernard, meditating on these beautiful words, cried out : " O Jesus, sweet in Thy voice, sweet in Thy face, sweet in Thy name, sweet in all Thy works !"

BARRIUS : *Ser.* cccvi.

" GOD ALONE CAN GIVE ME CONSOLATION."

Not many years ago Father de Foresta was preaching in one of the churches of Orleans. From the pulpit he observed a young woman kneeling before the altar of Our Lady, and seemingly in great affliction. When the sermon was ended and the devotions of the day had come to a close, and after the faithful had departed to their homes, she still remained kneeling, motionless, where he had first seen her. Taking her aside, he asked her to make known to him the cause of her sorrow.

" Alas ! my Father," she said in reply, " God alone can give me consolation, for He alone can change the hearts of men."

" This is indeed true, my child," the priest said ; " but perhaps I, His servant, might be able to

assist you in your distress. Would you confide in me ?"

" May God reward you, my Father," was her answer. " Know, then, that the two persons who are most dear to me in this world live at enmity with God. My father and my brother are free-thinkers, and hate everything that savours of religion. I unceasingly implore the Most Holy Mother of God to obtain for me their conversion, but my unworthiness does not merit this favour from her."

" You are praying for them, my child," replied the priest, " and in this you are doing well ; but that is not enough : you must add something else to your prayers. Have you ever gently asked them to accompany you to the House of God, to assist along with you at some splendid ceremony, or be present at Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament ?"

" O my Father, if I even dared to refer to these things it would only be the cause of greater anger."

" Believe me, my child," continued the priest ; " join this good work to your prayers, and fear not their angry words. Moreover, there is a certain manner of speaking which does not provoke irritation, and cannot give cause to displeasure. Charity can find words which dispel every feeling of animosity ; and even although these words should not be amicably received at first, they will leave an impression which will produce fruit in due season."

She followed this holy counsel. That same day she culled the most beautiful flowers her little garden produced, and, having formed them into a beautiful nosegay, presented them to her father, while at the

same time she embraced him with more affection than ever before.

Her father, who loved his child with intense affection, could not refrain from shedding tears as he gazed on the amiable countenance of his child, and returned her affectionate embrace with equal love. "No doubt, my little one, you have given me these beautiful flowers and embraced me so lovingly because you want me to give you some costly ornaments or some new apparel."

"Ah! my dearest father, you are quite right," she answered; "I do wish you to give me something, but something a thousand times more precious than what you have spoken of, and which will also give me a thousand times more pleasure. I want you this evening to come with me to Benediction."

On hearing this request, the unfortunate father completely changed his countenance and his demeanour towards her.

"How do you dare," said he, "to propose such a thing to me? Such a request is an affront which no words can describe;" and he continued to address her in the same strain for a considerable time, so that the whole household became alarmed, and thought that something untoward had occurred. Her brother came in haste into the room, and, learning what had taken place, and especially that his sister had the audacity to ask his father to accompany her to an act of religious worship, he became so infuriated that he struck her a severe blow on the face.

"Julian, my brother," she said meekly, in answer to this vile outrage, "you may strike me again, and

as often as you please, but you will never hinder me from doing all that is in my power to save two souls who are more dear to me than anything in this world."

These inspired words, that gentleness and patience of one whom they both loved with the most tender affection, touched them to the quick, and the father and brother, without further hesitation, consented to accompany her to Benediction.

From that moment an indefinable change came over them. Two months afterwards they knelt at the tribunal of penance, and became reconciled to God, and ever afterwards led good Christian lives.

L'Apostolat des Enfants Chrét., p. 141.

THE PIOUS LADY OF ALEXANDRIA.

The holy Abbot Cassian relates that there dwelt in his time a noble lady in Alexandria who, for the love of God, desired to suffer much in this world, that she might gain for herself greater glory in Heaven.

Not content with bearing heroically the sufferings that she received from the hands of God, she tried to procure for herself others, that she might have an opportunity of enduring more for God, and of practising the virtue of patience.

As at that time the Church of Alexandria provided support for many poor widows, she went to St. Athanasius, the Bishop, and besought him to choose from amongst them one whom she might take to her home, and provide for at her own expense and by the labour of her own hands.

The holy Bishop gladly consented, and gave

orders that one should be chosen for her who was of a gentle disposition and pious in her conduct. This woman the lady took home with her, and treated her with every mark of attention, attending with the greatest care to the least of her wants.

The pious old woman, in her gratitude, ceased not to praise her benefactress, and to thank her for the care she was bestowing on her and her great kindness to her.

But this was not what the good lady desired, so she returned to the Bishop, and complained to him that he had sent her one who, instead of giving her an opportunity of exercising her patience, was only placing her in the danger of becoming proud, by hearing so many words of praise and thanks bestowed on her.

The Bishop answered that it would not be difficult to find one who would in every way satisfy her wishes, and accordingly gave orders that one should be chosen for her who was of an irritable temperament, whom it was impossible to please, and who knew not what it was to be grateful for anything done for her.

This woman she received with great kindness, and tended her even with greater solicitude than the former one. In return for all her care and the attentions bestowed upon her, she received only ingratitude and complaints that she was not properly cared for. Sometimes her anger carried her so far that she raised her hands against her patient benefactress, and cruelly struck her.

The pious lady had now found in stern reality what she had so earnestly desired. She went to

St. Athanasius, and thanked him for having sent her a woman who had taught her patience, and had procured for her so many occasions for gaining merit for eternity.

It is true, indeed, that frequently she was tempted to relinquish her charge, on account of the cruel treatment she constantly received, but she laid aside the thought and persevered in her attentive care of her.

After living for many years in this pious exercise of charity, mortification, and meekness, she went to receive from her Heavenly Father the reward promised to those who performed these virtues.

My child, if you cannot ask of God to send you great crosses, as some of the Saints have done, bear patiently those which God has destined for you, and in your daily prayers say with great devotion: "O my God, teach me to be meek of heart."

THE OLD MAN AND HIS SERVANT JOHN.

Long ago in the East there was a very infirm old man, who for the space of twelve years had not been able to do anything for himself. He was assisted day and night in his necessities by a man-servant called John.

Now, although this servant attended faithfully to all the wants of his infirm master, he never received from him even one kind word. On the contrary, the old man treated him in the harshest manner possible, and spoke to him most rudely. John did not seem to heed this treatment, but continued to serve him with as much care and solicitude as if he had been treated with the greatest kind-

ness. Even more than this, he often deprived himself of things which he could have used for himself, in order that he might make the old man still more comfortable.

John did all this simply to please God. He knew that it was the Will of God that he should attend to this poor old man, and he did so simply to please Him, looking for his reward, not on earth, but in Heaven.

So time passed on, and the old man drew near his end. When the monks who dwelt in the neighbouring desert heard that he was dying, they assembled in great numbers around his bed to assist him in his passage out of this life into the next.

As they were kneeling around his humble couch, he said to them : " Go, call my servant, for I want to speak to him."

The servant came in at once to his master's room.

The dying man took him by the hand, and said to him these words : " Remain near to God ;" and he said them three times.

He meant to say to him : " Do all your works in the presence of God and for God alone, and look for your reward not from man, but from God."

Then, turning towards the disciples who were there, he said : " Do you see that man ? Well, I recommend him to your special care when I am gone. He is not a man : he is an angel in the flesh ; for during these twelve years of my illness he has watched over me and taken care of me with the most affectionate attention, and with a heart full of love ; and during all that time he has never even once heard a kind word come from my lips. He

did it all for God. Ah ! yes, he is indeed an angel from Heaven, and God will reward him there for what he has done for me."

And the old man died. John was taken care of by the pious solitaries of Thebes, and afterwards became famous among them all for the holiness of his life and the great perfection he attained. *Pratis Spirit.*

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES INSULTED.

A young gentleman who did not like St. Francis of Sales went one evening to his house, and raised a great tumult under the very window of the room where the Saint was sitting, by making his dogs bark loudly and his servants cry out most insulting words. He did this that he might show his hatred for the Saint ; but St. Francis seemed not to pay any heed to what he was doing.

Seeing that the Saint was not in the least disturbed by the noise, the man had the audacity to go into his house, and even into the room where he was sitting, and to utter words of the greatest insolence before his very face. Yet the Saint made no reply. This made the man still more angry, and he became even more insolent than before, and continued his insulting language till he became exhausted. At length, seeing he could not make the Saint angry, he went away.

As soon as he had gone out, the friends of the Saint asked him how he had been able to bear so patiently such insolence.

St. Francis answered : " It is not because I did not feel it, for in my heart I was much tempted to rise up and order him away ; but I have long ago

made an agreement with my tongue that when my heart is disturbed it is not to say one word till the angry feeling has died away. It was in this manner that I was able to bear so patiently with him who spoke to me with so much anger."

My child, it is in this way that you also should watch over your heart, that no anger or worldly feeling may make you forget that God alone should possess it.

V. Temperance.

Temperance is a virtue which serves to guide us to a proper use of the pleasures of the taste. It teaches us how to satisfy ourselves with what nature requires of us for our bodily support, without going beyond the limits of what necessity requires, and especially by carefully shunning every excess in eating and drinking.

THE FIRST CHRISTIANS AT TABLE.

"And they that believed," writes St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles (ii. 44), "were together, and had all things common. Their possessions and goods they sold, and divided them to all, according as everyone had need. And continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people."

And Tertullian ("Apol.," xxxix.) thus describes the feasts which were in his day so common among the Christians: "The only name by which these

feasts are known is *Agapes*, which means *Charity*; and truly it is the custom amongst us to help the poor out of our means, because we know that they are the privileged friends of God.

" As our feasts are prepared for a right and holy purpose, there always reigns in them perfect order, and everything that can wound the virtue of modesty is banished far from them. Before sitting down to table, we participate in a heavenly food that is the food of the soul—prayer to God. Then we eat joyfully what is necessary to appease our hunger, and we drink also in moderation, in such a manner as not to endanger the virtue of holy purity.

" When our repast is ended, we again unite together in praising God and singing psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, so that we end our meals as we began them—with prayers to God. Then, when we disperse, we do not run hither and thither on the streets, neither do we join in boisterous amusements, but conduct ourselves as those do who are anxious to preserve unsullied their modesty and chastity.

" Finally, when we reach our homes, people who see us know well that we have not so much satiated our bodies with the food that perishes as we have nourished our souls with the food that endureth unto life everlasting."

VI. Brotherly Love.

The virtue of Brotherly Love is the result of the observance of that command of Jesus Christ, " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself "; and St. Paul

describes it in these words : " Charity is patient, is kind ; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up ; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own ; is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

THE TWO BROTHERS : A LEGEND OF JERUSALEM.

A beautiful legend is handed down to us in connection with the site on which the Temple of Solomon was built in Jerusalem. The ground is said to have been the property of two brothers, one of whom had a family to support, and the other had no children.

On the night following the gathering in of the harvest, the wheat having been divided into two equal parts, the elder brother said to his wife : " My younger brother is infirm, and is not able to bear the burden of the day and the heat. I will arise, take some of the sheaves, and place them along with his portion, without his knowledge." This he did.

The younger brother, being moved by a similar motive, said within himself : " My elder brother has a family, and I have none. I will arise, take some of the sheaves apportioned to me, and place them along with his, without informing him." This, too, was done.

Judge of their mutual astonishment when on the following morning each found his quantity of wheat the same as on the previous day. This happened on several successive nights, when, as the mystery

still remained unsolved, each came to the resolution at the same time to watch and see how it occurred. They did this, and on the following night the two brothers met each other half-way between their respective stores, bearing the wheat in their arms.

Upon ground hallowed by such associations, continues the legend, the Temple of Solomon was built, a Temple so spacious and magnificent as to be the admiration of the whole world.

Alas ! how many in these days, my child, would sooner possess themselves of the entire property of their brethren than add to it a single sheaf !

Ave Maria, xiii. 799.

THE LAY-BROTHER AND THE ROBBER.

In the monastery of Clairvaux lived a lay-brother of great piety, who had learned from the example of Jesus Christ to be always meek and humble of heart. No one ever saw him give way to anger, and although his patience was oftentimes tried, he was never seen to show the least sign of impatience.

The other religious, seeing his wonderful meekness, and knowing that he was of the same nature and dispositions as they themselves, one day asked him for the secret that enabled him to be always so patient and meek.

He answered them : " My brethren, I long ago took the firm resolution, which by the grace of God I have ever faithfully kept, that every time I received any reproach, either justly or unjustly, I would always say an ' Our Father ' for him who reproached me."

This example was imitated by the good brothers of Clairvaux, and an undisturbed peace reigned in that holy house.

One day this pious lay-brother was obliged to pass through one of the thick forests that at that time covered the country. As he was passing on his way, he was attacked by a band of robbers, who took away from him everything he had, and even struck him, and in other ways abused him.

When the robbers had gone away, the brother rose from the ground on which they had left him, and, kneeling down, asked God to pardon them.

It happened that one of the robbers, going back, saw him thus kneeling with his hands stretched out towards Heaven, so he watched him for a time to see what he would do. But as he continued for a long time to pray, the robber returned in haste to his companions, and, striking his breast, said to them : " What have we done ? Oh, woe to us for touching so holy a man, for most assuredly the anger of God will soon fall upon us. Since the moment we left him he has not ceased praying, and I am sure he must be praying for us."

The robbers, hearing these words, returned to the place where they had left the servant of God, and found him still on his knees, praying with all the fervour of a Saint. They at once gave him back all that they had taken from him, and asked him to pardon them for what they had done. They then went away, leaving him in peace.

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES AND HIS ENEMY.

St. Francis of Sales having received a great insult from a certain individual, and having endeavoured to appease him by urging several good reasons with very great sweetness, he concluded by saying: "After all, I would have you to know that, if you had put out one of my eyes, I would look at you with the other one as affectionately as if you were the best friend I possessed." "Shall we not bear," he would say, "with those with whom God Himself bears, having before our eyes the example which Jesus Christ Himself gives us when He prayed on the Cross for His enemies? Who would not love him, this dear enemy, for whom Jesus Christ prayed and for whom He died?"

ST. PHOCAS, THE GARDENER.

St. Phocas was born at Sinope, a town in Pontus. He was by trade a gardener, and possessed a piece of ground near the gate of that town, which he cultivated with his own hands, and with the produce of which he supplied his own wants and those of many poor people who came to ask him for an alms or beg a little food to appease their hunger. His house was open to everyone whom Providence sent in his way, and as it was situated on the highway many came to visit him, and he joyfully gave them whatever they stood most in need of. His charity was soon to be rewarded with the crown of martyrdom.

The persecution against the Christians was at that time raging over all the Empire, and everywhere the faithful were sought out, and brought before the

tribunals of the pagan judges. Although the lowly condition of Phocas, and his humble trade of gardener, might have hidden him from the eyes of those who were in search of the servants of Christ, his piety and charity betrayed him, and he was denounced to the Judge as being a Christian.

The Judge sent soldiers to arrest him, and, without any further trial, to put him to death. But these men, never having seen him, and not even knowing in what part of the town he dwelt, met him near his house without knowing that he was the one of whom they were in search. They asked him if he would be kind enough to allow them to rest for a time in his house, as they were tired. Phocas received them with great kindness, and placed before them such refreshments as he had. They did not tell him why they had come to Sinope, for it was their intention to find out secretly where Phocas dwelt, that he might not be able to escape.

But during the course of their meal, being pleased with the kindness of their host, they thought that they might make known to him the object of their mission, having first exacted from him a promise that he would not reveal it to anyone till after their departure. "We have been sent," they said, "to search for a certain zealous Christian who lives in this town; his name is Phocas, and we have received orders to put him to death as soon as we find him. If you know him and the place where he lives, you would add one more favour to those we have already received from you if you would inform us."

The servant of God heard these words which so much concerned himself without showing the least

sign of fear or alarm, and, although he could easily have secured his safety by flight, since he was unknown to them, he secretly rejoiced that God had given him this glorious opportunity of dying for His Holy Name's sake.

"I will be most glad to assist you," he said. "I know this Phocas of whom you are in search, and I promise to bring him here to you within twenty-four hours, so remain here at your ease, and eat and drink as if you were in your own homes."

The Saint employed the time he had mentioned to them in preparing himself for martyrdom. When he had dug a grave for himself, and prepared everything that was necessary for his funeral, he went back to the soldiers and said: "Now, my friends, I have come as I promised you, and I have brought you the man you want; you have only now to seize him."

"But where is he?" they asked. "Take us to the place where you have concealed him."

"I myself am the man; I am Phocas," said the Saint. "You have now only to execute the orders you received. Let nothing hinder you from doing so, for I am ready."

The soldiers were thunderstruck at this announcement, and could not utter one word, so great was their astonishment. Neither could they find it in their hearts, pagans though they were, to kill one who had been so kind to them. But the Saint, seeing their intention of leaving him unhurt and fearing to lose the crown of martyrdom he had coveted so much, and which he thought was within his reach, said to them in a tone of fervent supplication:

" Do not be afraid to kill me, for I lay down my life for a good and holy cause, and it is for me the greatest happiness on earth. By putting me to death you will make me happy for all eternity in Heaven."

For a time he spoke to them in vain; none of them could find courage to do what he asked. At length one of them, less grateful than the others, drew his sword and severed his head from his body, and, at the same moment, his soul was carried by the hands of the holy angels to receive the crown of eternal glory.

Acts of the Martyrs in the Second Century.

VII. Diligence.

Diligence, my child, consists in accomplishing with a joyous activity the duties God has placed upon us. Also it has for its end the gaining of merit for eternity by constantly doing all the good we can to please God, remembering that time is short, and that the night cometh in which no man can work. St. Peter exhorts us to " labour the more that by good works we may make sure our calling and election " (2 Pet. i. 10).

SS. RUFINUS AND VALERIAN, MARTYRS.

When the martyrs St. Rufinus and St. Valerian were undergoing terrible tortures for the sake of Jesus Christ, they prayed to God with one voice, saying : " O Divine Saviour, help us, and, for Thy holy Name's sake, deliver us."

During the night an angel of the Lord appeared to them and said : " Rufinus and Valerian, act manfully and courageously, for our Heavenly Master will soon admit you into the number of His holy ones in Heaven ; there you shall receive the crowns which He has destined for you, and which I have come to show you."

Saying these words, he showed them two magnificent crowns, glittering with precious stones, and placed them upon their heads, as a sign of the eternal reward soon to be given them.

You likewise, my child, have a crown of glory awaiting you in Heaven. It is to be given to you if, like these holy martyrs, you fight manfully and labour diligently. Take courage, then ; Jesus is with you as He was with them, and you will easily gain the victory.

THE BRIGHT CROWN.

We read in the Lives of the ancient Fathers that there was one of them who laboured without ceasing to become more and more perfect. Day by day he increased his austerities and good works without allowing himself any repose or rest from his labours. The brethren, thinking that he would become wearied, and might shorten his life by his excessive labours, one day begged of him to take a little rest.

" No, my brethren," he answered ; " let me labour and suffer as long as I am upon the earth, that I may receive a brighter crown in Heaven. It is the thought of that crown of glory that consoles me and sustains me in my weariness. Believe me, my children, I am of opinion that Abraham himself,

when he saw the greatness of the eternal rewards of Heaven, was sorry he had not laboured more while he was here on earth."

"BEGIN THIS DAY TO LOVE GOD."

In the Life of Montalembert we read that one day his beloved daughter came to him in his room, where he was sitting alone, and said to him: "My dear father, I am fond of everything around me; I love pleasure, wit, society and its amusements; I love my family, my studies, my companions, my youth, my life, my country; but I love God better than all, and I desire to give myself to Him."

The father said: "My dearest child, is there something that pains or grieves you that you speak thus?"

For answer she went to the bookshelves, and took down one of the books her father had written, called "The Monks of the West," in which he showed how much the Saints loved God, and how they for the most part had served Him from the very beginning of their lives. "It is you," she answered, "who have taught me that withered hearts and weary souls are not the things which we ought to offer to God."

LVI

THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS AND THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

If we desire to please God in this world, my child, and possess Him in eternity, it is necessary for us to live in that state of life to which He has called us.

There are two states of life in God's Church : one He has appointed for the greater number of His children, and is called the secular life ; the other, named the religious life, is for those whom He has chosen out of the world to minister to Him in His sanctuary or to live apart from the world in monasteries and convents, and who are more intimately united to Him by bonds of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

I. On the Religious Life.

When God calls one to embrace the religious life, He bestows on such a one a great grace, because that one is chosen to dwell closely united to Himself, not only in Heaven hereafter, where virgins follow Him wheresoever He goeth, but even here on earth is privileged to partake more intimately of His choicest favours. Happy is the one who has been called to this holy and noble state ; happier still if he corresponds with the grace bestowed on him.

THE GOLDEN CHAIN.

It is related by Ruffin that a Father of the desert one day had a beautiful vision of the blessed in Heaven. He saw in Paradise an innumerable multitude of Saints in the enjoyment of the beatific vision of God. All of them shone with a splendour which it is impossible for human lips to describe; but there were amongst them some that were more beautiful than the others. They wore around their necks rich chains, as if made of the purest gold, and on their heads were brilliant crowns of light.

He asked the angel who showed him these things who these were, and why they were so different from the others. The angel answered him: "These whom you see in such great splendour are those who when in the world not only kept the commandments of God perfectly, but who also practised the evangelical counsels, and had sacrificed all things for the love of Jesus Christ. The golden chains they wear and the magnificent crowns that are upon their heads were bestowed upon them as a recompense for their having renounced all temporal things for the love of God." SCHOUPPE: *Instructions*, iii. 539.

JANE OF PORTUGAL, WHO SERVED GOD FAITHFULLY.

Jane, the daughter of Alphonsus, King of Portugal, when lying on her bed of death, and just before she died, exclaimed in the presence of the Bishops and the religious who knelt in prayer around her: "Oh, how sweet it is to serve the Lord! Oh, how good He is, and how full of mercy to those who have consecrated themselves to live for Him! I am about to

depart out of this life, and I shall soon enter into the house of my God. Oh, how full of joy and happiness I am at this moment !"

God had made choice of this noble Princess, and from her tender infancy destined her to become one of His most devoted servants, and she on her part faithfully corresponded with His grace.

When only three years old, it was her delight to be taken to the churches, for she knew that God dwelt in them, and she desired to be near Him and to pray to Him. The amusements of the children of her own age had no attraction for her ; the only thing she desired was to be always with God.

When she had reached her eighteenth year, she was entrusted with the government of the kingdom during the absence of her father the King, who had gone forth to wage war against the Moors. This duty she accomplished with singular success ; and, although she gave full attention to the affairs of the kingdom, she attended with the same assiduity as before to the exercises of piety she had been accustomed to fulfil. It is recorded of her that, being convinced that God alone can assure victory to those engaged in war, she would, like another Moses, kneel with her hands raised upwards towards Heaven and pray, while her father, like another Josue, fought on the field of battle that he might exterminate the infidels. The success of the war was worthy of the undaunted courage of the King and of the continual fervent prayers of his saintly daughter. The Moors were routed, and Alphonsus returned triumphantly to Lisbon.

His pious daughter went forth to meet him,

accompanied by the lords and ladies of the Court; and when asked by her father what recompense she desired for the splendid manner in which she had ruled the kingdom in his absence, she said: "My father, there is but one thing I wish to obtain from you, which will fully reward me for all I have done for you. I beseech you to permit me now to retire from the world, and consecrate the remainder of my life to God among the religious of the Order of St. Dominic in the city of Aviero, for I prefer to serve God in the obscurity of the cloister rather than to live among the splendours of your noble Court."

The amazement of the Court and of the people was not less than that of the King her father, who was struck dumb with bewilderment on hearing these words. When able to speak he said that a request of that kind required mature consideration. For nearly two years he refused to give his consent to her request, hoping that she would ultimately change her mind. In this he deceived himself, for her desire increased in intensity the longer his consent was delayed.

Finally, seeing that he could no longer oppose the vocation of his child without offering resistance to the Will of God, he granted his consent. The pious Princess with great joy laid aside the rich ornaments which necessarily embellish persons of her rank, in exchange for the simple garments of the nun. God rewarded her interiorly with that peace which surpasses all understanding, because, for His sake, she had thrown at her feet the pleasures and the transitory honours of this life.

She gave up her holy soul to God on the thirteenth day of May, in the year 1490, and went to Heaven to possess there the joys that can never fade.

Lives of the Kings of Portugal.

BLESSED BAPTISTA VARANI'S DESIRE OF HEAVEN.

Blessed Baptista Varani was the daughter of a great and powerful Prince of Italy. From her earliest years Jesus Christ had chosen her to be His spouse, but for a long time, being surrounded by the pleasures of the world, she did not obey His call.

Very soon, however, she saw that all the promises the world made her were false and empty. Then she turned away from them to consecrate herself to her Heavenly Spouse, Whose gentle voice she always heard asking her to come to Him.

The first obstacle she had to encounter was on the part of her father, who had for her a boundless affection. He had already formed great projects for her future life, and had chosen for her a husband who would bring her happiness, as well as augment the glory of his own house. And when she made known to him her resolution to renounce the world for ever, and give herself to God alone, he would not even listen to her.

For the space of two years he resolutely opposed her design, and in order the better to succeed he employed every means a loving father's heart could suggest—promises, flattery, and endearing caresses; but these proving of no avail, he had recourse to threats. Then he caused her for a long time to live in solitude, that he might excite within her a desire

to mingle again in the society of the world ; but here again he failed, for in all these trials her Heavenly Father sustained her by His grace, and consoled her by His favours. But that she might not be tempted to yield to pride she besought Our Lord to make her a companion in His sufferings, as well as in His joys.

Her prayer was heard. Not long afterwards she was seized by a serious illness which afflicted her for thirteen years. " I endured this affliction," she afterwards told her Confessor, " with a joy it would be impossible to describe. I do not boast of this, because it was a favour of God to me, and not on account of any merits I might have acquired.

" At the end of seven months from the time my illness began, during which time my death was daily expected, I was able to rise from my bed. Then Father Gregory—who, if the unanimous voice of the people is to be believed, is now reigning with God in Heaven—taught me to meditate on the Passion of Our Lord, and to recite the Rosary of Our Lady. These devotions gave me great consolation.

" One day, when I was meditating on the mystery of the Transfiguration, I received from Heaven promises so full of comfort that even now, when I think of them, my heart is brimful of joy. There is nothing so true as those words of the Psalmist : ' Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.' I know this now from my own experience ; for as soon as I had tasted of the sweetness of my Jesus' love, I saw that He alone was worthy of being loved.

" There then came into my mind so great a desire

of beholding His sacred countenance that all my prayers seemed to be only one continual aspiration to see Him face to face. Everything I saw, even the grass of the fields, and the flowers, recalled to my mind His sovereign beauty, and inflamed my heart. Every time I raised my eyes heavenwards, I called to mind those beautiful words of the Psalms: 'The heavens declare the glory of God'; and I would exclaim: 'O my sweet Jesus, if Your works are so beautiful, how beautiful must You Yourself be! Show Yourself unto me, I beseech You, my Master—show Yourself unto me, show Yourself unto me! Why do You leave me here, waiting and wearying so long? You are my only hope, my only love. Why do You hide Yourself from me? Why do You not show me Your beloved countenance?'"

Our Lord was pleased to hear the prayers of His servant. He appeared visibly to her, and she was able to gaze upon that face which is the joy and the admiration of the angels. The Prince, her father, said to her one day: "I yield to the command of God, for I am afraid of His anger if I disobey. It is only the fear of the evils that He may send me if I refuse to obey that makes me give my consent. Do, then, as you have chosen."

RIBADENEIRA: *Vit. SS.*, June 2.

ST. GENEVIEVE OF PARIS.

When St. Genevieve of Paris was about ten years old, it happened that two great Bishops, St. Germanus and St. Lupus, were going over to England to preach against a new heresy which had arisen

in that country. On their way to Great Britain they had to pass through the village of Nanterre, where Genevieve then lived.

When the people of the village heard that two such great and holy men were coming to visit them, they were filled with great joy, and prepared to give them a suitable welcome. They went out in a body to meet them, and when they had received their blessing, they accompanied them to the village.

The holy Bishops went at once to the church, and St. Germanus preached to them. During his discourse he saw sitting before him, in the midst of the congregation, a little girl who all the time listened to his words with the greatest attention. It was Genevieve.

When the sermon was ended, and while the people were yet in the church, St. Germanus said: "Tell that little girl to come to me, for I have something to say to her."

Genevieve went to the place where the good Bishop was standing. At first she was afraid and trembled, but the Saint spoke to her so kindly that her fear soon vanished. He kissed her on the forehead, and said to her: "My child, what is your name?"

"My name is Genevieve, my lord."

"And your parents, what are they called?"

"My father is called Severus and my mother Gerontia. These are they," said she, pointing to the place where they were standing.

The Bishop made a sign to them to approach, and when they came near, he said to them: "You may consider yourselves happy in being the parents

of this dear child, for the very angels of Heaven were filled with joy on the day when she was born. Her virtues will one day make her precious in the eyes of God, and so faithfully will she accomplish the resolution she has taken of serving Him that even the greatest men will one day look on her as a model for their imitation."

Then, turning to Genevieve, he said : " My child, tell me, do you wish to consecrate yourself, soul and body, to Jesus Christ ?"

The eyes of the little girl became bright with joy at these words, and, with a heavenly smile on her countenance, she answered : " O my Father, long have I desired to have no other spouse but Jesus Christ ; and oh, grant me this request : that I may consecrate myself to Him through your hands, and give me your blessing."

" My child," answered the Bishop, with emotion, " willingly do I grant you your petition. See, then, that you persevere in your holy choice, and be faithful to the promise that you have made."

When the hour of the evening office had come, the Bishop went to the church again, and during all the time of the service he kept his right hand on the head of the little girl, in sight of all the people. And when the office was ended, he made her sit at his side during the repast of which he then partook, after which he sent her home to her parents. But before she left him he made her promise to come back next day to see him before he left the village. Next morning she came as she had promised. Again the Bishop spoke to her of her consecration to God, and as they were speaking, the

Bishop, casting his eyes upon the ground, saw at her feet what appeared to be a piece of money, on which was engraved the figure of a cross. It was a medal which had been miraculously placed there.

The Bishop took it into his hands and gave it to Genevieve, saying : " My child, accept this medal as a gift from your Heavenly Spouse, Jesus Christ, and wear it always on your breast. From this time you must never wear any of those vain ornaments of which women are so proud, but your only desire must be to make your soul pleasing to your Father in Heaven, by adorning it with virtue."

After this exhortation, the Bishop departed on his journey, and Genevieve returned to her parents.

SATAN TEMPTS ST. MACARIUS TO LEAVE THE DESERT.

Satan, who was enraged at the holy life of St. Macarius, who had left the world to serve God in the solitude of the desert, ceased not to tempt him, sometimes even taking the form of an angel of light, that he might more easily deceive him. On one occasion he put into his mind the thought that he was misspending his time in the desert, and that if he went to Rome, or some other great city, he would be able to do so much more for the glory of God by serving the sick in the hospitals, and by many other good works for his neighbour.

This temptation remained in his mind for a long time, and not knowing how to act, he prayed earnestly to God to make known to him His Blessed Will ; and he soon discovered that the thought came from the Evil One. One day, being more disturbed

than usual by this temptation, he threw himself upon the ground, and said to the tempter: "You can drag me to Rome if you like, but I will never walk thither. I will lie here all day rather than go where you want me to go."

When the evening came, the temptation was as great as ever; so, rising from the ground, he filled two great baskets with sand, and, putting them on his shoulders, began to walk through the desert. A man coming from Antioch met him, nearly bowed down to the ground under the heavy burden he carried, and said: "My Father, what is that load you are carrying? Let me help you."

But St. Macarius answered: "No; I will carry it myself, for I am tormenting him who is tormenting me."

At night he returned to his cell, fatigued indeed, but he had overcome the temptation.

THE SOLDIER-MONK'S TRIAL.

During an expedition of the French into Kebylia, a desperate charge of the Arabian cavalry forced a company of zouaves into a narrow defile, where they held out against the enemy until reinforced from the main body. It was a fierce encounter, and was attended with great loss on both sides. The French ranks were thinned at the first attack. In their retreat they had left on the battle-field, among others, an old sergeant, dangerously wounded.

Exposed to the peril of becoming the victim of the Arabs, the zouave bethought himself of a medal of the Blessed Virgin which he wore around his neck. Taking it in his hands, he exclaimed: "Holy

Virgin, if you save me from my enemies, I promise you that as soon as I am discharged from the service I will consecrate the remainder of my life to holy religion in the monastery of La Trappe."

The Arabian cavalry passed near him twice, once in charging the French, and again in beating a retreat, but he escaped observation. After the battle he was taken to the hospital of Algiers, and tenderly nursed. His wounds soon healed, but he was declared unfit for further service.

The old soldier now thought of nothing but the accomplishment of his promise, and was soon on his way to Staoneli. Arrived at the monastery, he asked to see the Father Abbot, and said to him: "I have come to beg of you to allow me to fulfil a vow I made during the late war. I promised the Blessed Virgin, in gratitude for her maternal protection, that I would become a Trappist when discharged from the army."

The Abbot explained to him all the difficulties that lay in the way. "The life of a Trappist," he said, "is very different from the life of a soldier. I fear you will become discouraged by the solitude and austerities required by all who embrace our Order. Here you would have to humble yourself to the dust."

"Father," answered the sergeant, "you forget that a faithful soldier is capable of the greatest sacrifices in serving his country. Could I be less generous in the service of my God?"

After a retreat of eight days, during which he followed the exercises with military precision, the zouave was admitted to the novitiate, receiving the

name of Brother Martial. The regularity of his conduct had for some time given great edification to all, when one day the Father Abbot gave him a humiliation in presence of the entire community.

" The Brother whom you see before you," he said, " is still remembered by the military authorities for his conduct during the last expedition in Kebylia. I will say no more, only I beg you to pray for him."

The soldier-monk changed colour; his eyes kindled with anger and resentment. He was about to demand an explanation of these ambiguous words, but he looked upon his Crucifix and remained silent.

For several days he bore his humiliation, the rule of silence forbidding him to speak one word. He imagined that all his brethren regarded him with suspicion and reproach; still, he tried to be patient, remembering that the Abbot had once said, in the words of St. Bernard, " There is no humility without mortification," and that in order to be a good monk, one must be content to be considered the least of men. Very soon a sweet peace stole into his heart, and he saw that his soldierly pride had made him exaggerate the humiliation to which he had been subjected.

At the end of the week the Abbot again summoned him before the assembled Chapter. " My brethren," he said, " bless God, Who has given grace to Brother Martial. Now that the time of trial is past, I will say that this brother was one of the bravest soldiers in Kebylia. You have all witnessed his resignation and humility; witness now his glorification. So it will be in the better world. ' He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' "

Saying this, the Abbot produced a decoration which had been sent to the old sergeant for his gallant conduct during the expedition.

Tears rolled down the cheeks of the soldier-monk, and in a trembling voice he said to the Abbot :

" I offer my decoration to the Blessed Virgin, who saved me from the Arabs, and who has caused me to find here so much peace and contentment. I would not exchange my lot with the greatest potentate on earth."

II. The First Evangelical Counsel : Voluntary Poverty.

Voluntary Poverty consists in the renouncement of all our temporal possessions, that we may the more surely acquire those of eternity.

Jesus Christ willingly became poor for the love of us. He humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant, and often He had no place whereon to lay His head.

Many pious souls have in all ages desired to imitate Him by renouncing all they possessed in this world, that they might gain for themselves the treasures He has promised to give hereafter to those who do this for His sake.

St. Jerome says : " He who is poor with Jesus Christ possesses an infinite treasure of riches."

" WHAT IS YET WANTING TO ME ?"

" And behold one came and said to Him : ' Good Master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting ?' Who said to Him : ' Why askest thou

Me concerning good? One is good, God. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.'

"He saith to Him: 'Which?'

"And Jesus said: 'Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

"The young man saith to Him: 'All these have I kept from my youth, what is yet wanting to me?'

"Jesus saith to him: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come, follow Me.'"

St. Matthew xix. 16 *et seq.*

THE BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS OF THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN.

The more one makes himself poor in this world for the sake of Jesus Christ, the greater will be the reward God will bestow on such a one in Heaven.

It happened once upon a time that a young brother of the Order of St. Francis felt so great a horror for the poor and coarse habit of his Order that he took the resolution of laying it aside, and of returning to the world. But before doing this he, at the advice of his Director, knelt down in prayer before the Most Blessed Sacrament, to recommend his cause to God. And as he knelt there he had a wonderful vision: he saw before him an immense multitude of Saints, who were coming towards him in procession two and two, and clothed in robes of great splendour, made of the most precious material;

their faces and their hands shone as the sun in its noonday glory, and as they were advancing they sang the magnificent hymns of Paradise.

Full of surprise at this vision, and desirous to know what it signified, the young brother had the hardihood to ask one of the Saints who was passing near him who those were who formed that beautiful procession.

"Know, my son," said he, "that we are all religious who are now in the possession of the glory of Paradise. The splendid garments with which we are clad have been given us by our Heavenly Father in exchange for the coarse habit which we wore when we were in the world; and the brightness which you see around us has been bestowed upon us in reward for the humility, patience, poverty, obedience, and chastity which we continually observed according to the rules of our holy Order. O my son, do not therefore consider it difficult to bear the coarse garments of a religious while you are in the world, since they will procure for you so much glory in eternity."

Saying these words, the vision disappeared, and the brother was consoled; he lived and died a fervent religious. SCHOUPPE, iii. 539.

God has promised, my child, to attend to the temporal wants of those who "seek first the Kingdom of God"—that is, who love Him and keep His commandments. If this is true of every Christian who lives piously, with how much greater confidence can those rely on Him, who have left all things they possessed in this world to follow Him!

ST. COLUMBANUS AND HIS DISCIPLES.

One day, in the monastery of Anagni, St. Columbanus and his disciples had nothing to eat but wild herbs and the bark of trees. Moreover, one of the religious was sick, and they had nothing suitable to offer him. Yet this want of the very necessaries of life in no way weakened their trust in their Heavenly Father, and God, according to His word, did not forget them in their poverty.

On the third day afterwards there came to the gate a stranger leading two horses heavily burdened. This man informed the brothers that he had suddenly felt an urgent impulse to carry provisions to them. He then unloaded his burden of bread, vegetables, and the other things he had brought, and took his departure.

All the religious then with one voice gave thanks to God for the assistance He had given them in their great necessity. As for the generous donor, the only thing he asked in return was that they would pray for his wife, who had been seriously ill for the previous twelve months, and of whose recovery he had nearly despaired. Columbanus gave him his blessing, and scarcely had an hour passed when the pious woman was entirely restored to her former health. *Répert. du Catéch.*

PIOUS CONFIDENCE OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

St. John of the Cross had an unlimited confidence in the Providence of God. One day the lay-brother in charge of the kitchen of the monastery went to tell him that they had no food for the next day. The Saint answered: "Leave to God, my brother, the

care of providing food for us; there is still a long time before midday of to-morrow; God is quite able to take care of us."

On the morning of the following day there was not a crumb of bread to be found in the whole house. Fortunately about midday a gentleman, who was very wealthy knocked at the gate, and asked the brother who opened it if perchance the religious were in want of food. "Last night," he said, "I dreamed that they were in dire poverty, and I have come to aid them."

The brother informed him of the sad state to which they were reduced, and the stranger gave them as much as they stood in need of to meet their present necessities. *Life of St. John of the Cross.*

III. The Second Evangelical Counsel: Perpetual Chastity.

Perpetual Chastity consists in consecrating oneself to God during the whole of one's lifetime to serve Him alone. The state of marriage is a holy state; Jesus Christ has even raised it to the dignity of a sacrament, and has appointed it for the greater number of His children on earth. But the state of virginity is a much more noble state, and many of the greatest Saints of God, following the example of Jesus Christ, our model in this as in all other things, have lived on earth as the angels do in Heaven, who neither marry nor are given in marriage.

St. Paul, referring to this, says: "He that giveth his virgin in marriage doth well, but he that giveth her not doth better" (1 Cor. vii. 38).

ST. EDMUND CONSECRATES HIS VIRGINITY TO GOD.

St. Edmund, the glory of England, was trained from a very early age, by the lessons and example of his pious mother, to the practice of every Christian virtue. When he had grown up, and the time was come for him to go to complete his studies at the celebrated University of Paris, this wise and prudent woman gave him many salutary counsels to protect him against the attacks of the evil spirit, who is ever ready to tempt the young and guileless.

Edmund, naturally inclined to virtue, was faithful to the precepts of his excellent mother. He avoided all bad company, and his greatest delight was to spend his leisure moments in visiting the churches consecrated to the Mother of God. Before taking food on festival days and Sundays, he would recite some of the Psalms. He had such a horror of sin that he was often heard to say, in words worthy to be written in letters of gold : " If I saw before me sin on the one hand, and Hell on the other, I would choose to fall into that terrible abyss rather than offend God by committing it."

Edmund, when as yet a young man, resolved to consecrate his virginity to God. For this end he made a solemn vow that the Immaculate Mother of God would be his only spouse. He on this occasion purchased two rings, on each of which he caused the words " Ave Maria " to be engraved ; one of these he kept for himself, the other he gave to Our Lady, placing it on one of the fingers of her statue in the church.

One day whilst he was walking with some of his

companions in the country they began to indulge in some unbecoming levities. Edmund was so offended that he at once withdrew from their company, and continued his walk alone.

In reward for his great modesty Our Lord Himself appeared to him on the way under the form of a little child of great beauty, and addressed him in these words : " Hail to thee, My beloved one."

Edmund was astonished on hearing a voice of such surpassing melody, and seeing a countenance of such glorious beauty ; he had never before heard or seen anything so heavenly.

Then Our Lord said to him : " How is it, Edmund, that you do not know Me, for I am always by your side ? Read what you see written on My forehead. ' Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews,' is My name."

The Child then disappeared, leaving the youthful Saint in an ecstasy of holy joy. *From his Life.*

" O JULIAN, THOU HAST CONQUERED !"

" My dear son, listen to the words of wisdom which I am about to speak to you. It is the Will of God that a man should marry, and so escape many temptations which might prove fatal to his innocence. Your mother and I desire you to enter the holy state of marriage, that you may pass through this life in piety and virtue." In these words did the father of St. Julian address his son when he had reached mature age.

The parents of St. Julian were among the principal citizens of Antioch, and were esteemed not only on account of their position, but also because of the

pious lives they led before God. Julian was their only child, and they were anxious that he should embrace the married state to perpetuate their name.

But Julian, whom they had taught to live for God, and to despise the things of this world and all its pleasures, which pass away so soon, had already consecrated himself to God by a vow of perpetual virginity. He endeavoured to delay giving the answer his father desired that he might gain time, and urged as his excuse that he was as yet very young, and that there was plenty of time, and that such an important matter required great deliberation.

"You are now eighteen years old," said his father in reply, "and at that age the passions are already strong, and what I desire you to do will be for you a safeguard and a protection. Besides, in the married life God can be served as faithfully in the world as in that one which is single."

Julian, urged by many of his father's relatives and friends to do as his parents requested, and at the same time mindful of his promise to God, asked a delay of seven days to consider what step he should take. He spent that whole week in prayer, fasting, watching, and tears, and when the evening of the seventh day came, overcome with fatigue he fell asleep.

Our Lord Himself was pleased to appear to him in a vision to console and strengthen him. "Arise," He said; "be of good courage, for you can fulfil the wish of your parents while at the same time you keep your vow to me. You will marry one who will love

chastity, and she will be faithful to Me, and will consecrate her virginity to Me for your sake; and in due time I will give to both of you the crown of virgins in the Kingdom of Heaven. Strengthen your heart and act manfully."

Julian arose from his sleep full of joy and courage, and thanked God. He then went to his parents, and told them that he would do as they desired. They, full of joy also, chose for his spouse a young woman of a noble family in Antioch, and who was, like their own son, the sole heiress of much wealth. Her name was Basilissa. Their marriage-day was a day of gladness and rejoicing in Antioch, and all the inhabitants united to offer the young couple words of congratulation.

In the midst of all these honours Julian humbled himself before God, from Whom alone he hoped to obtain the victory.

When Basilissa appeared, accompanied by a great multitude of her relatives and friends, Julian met her with a joyful countenance, but earnestly prayed to God to assist him by His grace. When evening was come, and they had retired to their chamber, Julian knelt down to pray. And as he prayed, behold the room was filled with the sweet odour of roses and lilies.

Basilissa said to her husband: "I perceive a sweet smell in the room; do you not also perceive it?"

"What smell do you speak of?" he said.

"We are at present in the midst of winter," she replied, "and there are no flowers here, and yet the room is so full of this exquisite odour that I am almost beside myself with happiness."

"This perfume you perceive here," replied Julian, "is not of this world; it comes from Jesus Christ Himself, the lover of pure souls, and Who bestows eternal life on those who for His sake have preserved perpetual chastity. If you wish to serve Him as I do, we will both of us love Him with our whole heart, and we will preserve inviolate that virginity for which such magnificent rewards are promised hereafter; becoming thus vessels of election, we will live and reign with Him in eternity, and be always united together in His Kingdom."

Basilissa replied: "What could be greater or more advantageous for us than to preserve that virginity that can gain for us everlasting life? I believe what you have said to me, and I wish to have but one heart with you to merit from Jesus Christ an eternal recompense in Heaven."

When she had said this Julian prostrated himself on the ground, adoring God, and said: "O God, finish the work which Thou hast begun in us." Basilissa also knelt down, and at that moment the room was shaken to its foundations, and a light of great brightness filled it—so bright that all the other lights seemed to be extinguished.

Then a wonderful vision was vouchsafed to them. The King of Eternal Glory, Christ Himself, appeared surrounded by a great multitude arrayed in white garments. He was accompanied by His Most Holy Mother, the Blessed Virgin, escorted by a company of holy virgins, also clad in white. Those who accompanied Our Blessed Lord sang these words, "O Julian, thou hast conquered," while those who accompanied Our Lady said, "Blessed art thou, Basilissa, because

you have listened to the salutary counsels of your husband, and have cast under your feet the deceitful pleasures of the world, for everlasting glory awaits you."

Then Our Lord said : " Let my soldiers, who have overcome the ancient Serpent with all his sinful suggestions, arise and read attentively what is written in the Book of Life." In answer to these words the two white-robed companies answered " Amen." Then two of the men came forward ; they wore white robes and cinctures of gold, each bearing in his hand a crown of gold, and they raised up Julian and Basilissa from their knees, saying to them : " Arise ; you have overcome, and your names are written in the book along with ours. See what has been prepared for you ; read, and you will see that the Lord has been faithful to His promises." Then He took their hands and joined them together.

The book was made of the purest silver, and the writing was in letters of gold. With these two were other four old men, who bore censers, in which burned odours of the sweetest perfumes. One of the old men said : " These censers and these perfumes are emblems of the merits you will gain, and which will daily ascend before the throne of God as an odour of sweetness. Oh, how happy you are to have despised the joys of this world in order that you may possess those that are to come which the eye of man hath not seen, nor the heart of man been able to conceive. Come, Julian, and read what the Most Holy Trinity has written in the book concerning you."

Julian went to the book, and read : " He that despises the pleasures of this world shall possess

hereafter those reserved in Heaven for the clean of heart, and Basilissa, whose heart is so pure, shall be admitted among that blessed company which surrounds the Queen of Heaven and the Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

Julian closed the book after having read these consoling words, to which all the others answered in a joyful voice "Amen." The vision then disappeared, and Julian and his spouse, in their joy at having seen the Lord, spent the night in singing hymns and canticles. But they in their humility concealed both the sacrifice they had made to God and the graces which they had received from Him.

Vies des Saints, January 9.

ST. HILARY AND HIS DAUGHTER ABRA.

St. Hilary, afterwards Bishop of Poitiers, was at one time a pagan, but by the grace of God became a fervent Christian. Before his conversion he was married, and had one daughter, Abra, who also became a Christian.

During his banishment in Phrygia on account of his zeal in defending the Church, God revealed to him that his daughter, who was at that time in France, had conceived a great desire to enter the married state, and that a certain young man was about to offer her his hand.

The Saint, whose most earnest desire was to see his daughter consecrated to God in holy religion, was filled with sadness at this revelation. He wrote a letter to her in which he told her that his whole desire was to see her happy and united to a spouse who should be worthy of her.

"My child," he wrote, "I have found for you a spouse far surpassing in every excellence anyone you may have known; one whose nobility, beauty and riches, greatness and majesty, far excels all that you could imagine, and it is my most earnest desire to see you espoused to him; I hope that you will wait till I return home, that with my own hands I may give him to you."

Abra, who loved her father affectionately, was overjoyed on receiving this letter, and impatiently awaited his return, that she might learn who it was whom he had chosen for her.

When the time of his banishment was ended, and he returned home again, he was met by his daughter, who eagerly pressed him to introduce her to her future husband.

Then her father, in words of burning enthusiasm, made known to her that the Spouse he had chosen for her was none other than her beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who was beautiful beyond all the sons of men, Whose riches far surpassed all that could be imagined, and Who loved her with an everlasting love, over which even death itself had no power, and he ended by asking her if she would accept Him, and live for Him alone.

"My dearest father," she answered, "if this Spouse you have chosen for me is so lovely and so beautiful, I will give my heart to Him, and to no other one; He shall be my portion for ever."

It was in this way her father succeeded in consecrating to God what he loved most tenderly on earth, and after a short but holy and happy life on earth, she passed without sickness or pain into the bosom

of her Beloved in Heaven, and her father, with tears in his eyes of joy rather than of sorrow, with his own hands laid her virginal body in the grave.

RIBADENEIRA : *Life of St. Hilary.*

IV. The Third Evangelical Counsel : Entire Obedience.

Entire Obedience consists in renouncing in everything our own will that we may accomplish with greater certainty the Divine Will under the direction of a Superior, who guides us in the Name of God.

Our Divine Lord, Who in everything He did submitted Himself to the Will of His Heavenly Father, exhorted His disciples and all Christians to imitate His obedience. "If anyone will come after Me," He said, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

THE SISTER OF CHARITY AT HER FATHER'S DEATH-BED.

A young Sister of Charity of a gentle and pleasing countenance was sitting weeping at the bedside of her dying father, the Count Julian de Mornay. It was evident he had but a very short time to live.

As she was watching and praying there the clock struck the hour of eight ; it was the hour when obedience required her to return to her convent. She instantly rose up, and having impressed a farewell kiss on the brow of the beloved invalid, prepared to take her departure.

A priest, who had been called in to assist him in his last moments, and who was kneeling in prayer beside

the dying man, seeing her about to depart, said to her: "My Sister, wait for only a few moments longer, that you may be able to close his eyes, for the end is near."

The pious Sister, although belonging to one of the most distinguished families of France, had chosen the better part, and had consecrated her youth and her entire life to the service of God's beloved poor.

She answered the good priest in these simple words: "My Father, I cannot remain longer, for before all other things I must obey, even though it may cost me much to do so. Oh, how I desire to be with my beloved father when the hour has come for him to take his departure to God! but it is impossible for me to remain longer. The rule of our Order requires me to return to the convent at this time, and I must obey."

With these words she departed.

Catéchisme de Persévérance, viii. 147.

SS. PLACIDUS AND MAURUS.

Our Blessed Lord told His disciples very often that the virtue of obedience was in a special manner dear to Him, and very often, too, has He shown in every age how much He loves obedient children by even performing great miracles in order to reward them.

St. Benedict was in his cell one day saying his prayers. It happened at that same time that one of his disciples called Placidus, who was very young, was sent by his Superior to bring water from a neighbouring lake in a pitcher.

When he was in the act of filling the pitcher, it

slipped out of his hand and fell into the water. In his desire to seize it, he suddenly stretched out his hand, and in doing so overbalanced himself and fell into the lake. As he was unable to swim, he was in great danger of being drowned, as he was soon carried by the force of his fall to a considerable distance from the land, where the lake was deep.

St. Benedict, from his cell, saw the danger, and at the same instant called on one of the little boys in the monastery to run to the lake and take him out. The boy's name was Maurus, and St. Benedict loved him more than all his other spiritual children on account of his childlike simplicity and perfect obedience.

Maurus, falling on his knees, besought the holy Abbot's blessing, and instantly ran to the lake to do what was required of him.

On reaching the lake he saw that Placidus was in imminent peril of his life, and without considering how he could reach him he ran forward, stepped upon the waters as if he was walking on solid ground, and seizing Placidus by the hair of his head, drew him towards the shore, and finally placed him on dry land.

When he turned round and saw that he had been walking on the water, he was filled with astonishment, as were also the rest of the monks who had hastened to the lake to assist him.

The venerable patriarch from his inmost heart gave thanks to God for this wonderful manifestation of His power, and took occasion to show his disciples how pleasing in the eyes of God is that one who practises the great virtue of obedience, since to reward it He had been pleased to work this great miracle.

RIBADENEIRA : *Life of St. Maurus.*

THE ABBOT AND THE OBEDIENT MONK.

One day as the Blessed Bonaventure was at work in the garden assisting Father Ignatius, his Superior, someone came to tell the Father that his presence was required in the monastery.

This was in the early morning. Before leaving him the Superior said to Brother Bonaventure : " Remain here till I return ; I will not be absent very long."

But the business for which he had been called proved more serious than he had anticipated ; it was to bring about a reconciliation between two persons who for a long time had lived in enmity with each other. This occupied him till the evening.

When at length he returned to the monastery, it was the hour for supper. He went to the refectory along with the other religious, and, looking round the room, he saw that the place usually occupied by Brother Bonaventure was empty.

" Where is Brother Bonaventure ?" he asked, " and why has he not come to supper ?"

" We do not know what has become of him," they answered. " Moreover, he was not here at dinner-time."

" May God forgive me," said the Superior ; " perhaps he may still be standing in the garden in the place where I left him in the morning. Go in haste and see."

They went, and found him there in the place where his Superior had told him to remain till he should return. *Petits Bolland.*, October 26.

O my child, how much should this example condemn us who are so often prone to disobedience and

to do what is most pleasing to ourselves, instead of obeying the commands of those whom God has placed over us!

"STOP! STOP!"

St. Vincent Ferrer was a great Saint; he was so holy that God worked many miracles by his hands.

His Superior, fearing that this great gift of miracles might make him proud, forbade him to work any more without his permission.

One day, as St. Vincent was in adoration before Jesus in the most holy tabernacle, it happened that a workman who was repairing the church fell from the top of a high scaffold. The Saint, seeing him in the act of falling, cried out to him at the same instant, "Stop! stop! I have not the power at present of raising you to life again." Then, rising up, he hastened to his Superior to obtain permission.

The Superior did not quite understand what he so earnestly wanted, but he was sure that, whatever it might be, the permission would be only too late. What was his astonishment when, following the obedient monk to the place of the accident, he saw suspended in the air the unfortunate mason whom he expected to find lying dead on the ground.

Sermons by the Blessed Curé of Ars.

My child, God may not in this world reward your acts of obedience by a miracle like this one, but be assured that in Heaven you will most certainly receive from Him an eternal reward for even the smallest act of this virtue which you perform for His sake.

THE DYING MONK.

In the monastery over which St. Bernard ruled, one of the monks was lying on his death-bed. He had led an innocent life, and had practised the virtue of obedience with great perfection. St. Bernard went to visit him, to encourage him in his last agony. "Take courage, my child," he said; "death is only the gate that leads to the eternal repose of Heaven when the labours of this weary life are over."

The dying monk answered, with joy on his countenance: "My Father, I am not afraid to die. I feel sure that I am going to Heaven, and that soon, very soon, I shall be in everlasting happiness in the bosom of my Heavenly Father."

St. Bernard, hearing these words, began to be afraid lest Satan might be tempting him to presumption, and told him that one ought rather to be afraid of the judgments of God, which are so strict and terrible.

"It is most true, Father," he replied, "yet I feel so full of confidence that all fear is banished from my heart. Have you not often told us that God will give His kingdom, not to the rich and powerful, but to those who are obedient? During my whole lifetime I have endeavoured to accomplish in everything the commands that were given me and the rules of our holy Order, and I am therefore sure that God will keep His word, and give me the Kingdom of Heaven according to His promise."

The holy Abbot, hearing these words, wept with joy. "Ah, my child," he said, "depart, then, from

this world without fear, for the gate that leads to eternal life is already open to receive you." The good monk died in his arms.

GOD'S MESSENGER.

St. Frances of Rome was once very ill. Her friends, who loved her, were filled with grief because they thought she was going to die. Frances alone was quite calm; she was willing to live or to die according to God's pleasure.

One night she was worse than usual, and was lying in her bed motionless, and exhausted with the pain she had suffered. Suddenly a bright light broke in upon the darkened room, and in the midst of the light there appeared a majestic figure wearing the robe of a pilgrim, but shining like the brightest gold.

"I am Alexis," he said. "I am sent from God in Heaven to ask if you would desire to be healed."

The Saint murmured faintly, "I have no desire but the Will of God. I accept life or death as He pleases."

"Life, then, it shall be," said Alexis, "for God's Will is that you should remain on earth to glorify Him."

Then, spreading his mantle over Frances, the vision disappeared from her, leaving her free from all pain, and quite well. *Ave Maria.*

THE OBEDIENT LAY-BROTHER.

On several occasions God made known to St. Bernard how great is the reward He will bestow

in Heaven on those who on earth practise the virtue of obedience.

It was the custom in the monastery of Clairvaux to send the lay-brothers to the various farms in the country which belonged to them, to cultivate the ground and to take care of the flocks.

One day, the eve of the great festival of Our Lady's Assumption, the brothers went to the monastery to celebrate that solemnity, leaving the farms in charge of one of their number.

It happened that in one of the farms not far from the monastery there was a lay-brother who was very ignorant of the things of this world, but who loved the Most Holy Mother of God with filial devotion. The Superior intrusted the farm to his care during the absence of the rest of the brethren.

This command was for the good monk a great disappointment, for nothing would have given him so much joy as to be able to celebrate, along with his brethren, the festival of his beloved Mother in Heaven. But, obedient to the voice of his Superior, he remained at his post without a murmur.

During the night, while alone, he turned his eyes towards the monastery where his brethren were assembled, and recited over and over again that prayer so dear to the heart of the Mother of God, the "Hail Mary."

St. Bernard knew by inspiration what he was doing, and when the brethren were assembled next morning to hear a sermon from him, he said to them: "You have, my beloved brethren, offered this day to our most glorious Mother in Heaven a sacrifice of praise that is most pleasing to her, and from

her hands will descend on you an eternal reward. But one of our brethren, a simple lay-brother, who was by obedience obliged to remain in charge of one of our farms, has this night gained more merit in the sight of God, and has given greater honour to the Queen of Heaven, than those who have sung together so sweetly her praises." Then he related to them how God had shown to him the obedience of the humble monk, and the reward He would one day give him.

The brethren, instead of being jealous of their brother, glorified God, Who had attached so great a reward to the virtue of obedience, and from that day they strove to cultivate that virtue which would enrich them with such heavenly blessings.

THE OBEDIENCE OF ST. SIMEON STYLITE.

When St. Simeon Stylite had spent three years in the desert, he ascended to the top of the mountain at the foot of which he had spent that time, and having attached a chain thirty feet in length to one foot, he fixed the other end in a great stone, so that he could not move from the place. There he spent his time in the contemplation of heavenly things and in prayer.

Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, hearing of the strange life he was leading, and thinking he might fall into the temptation of vainglory, went to the desert to visit him.

"Why do you live here in this strange manner?" asked the Bishop; "it is only wild beasts that have to be chained in that way. God has bestowed on man reason and free-will, which, by His grace, are

sufficient to guide and restrain him. You must therefore at once remove it."

The Saint, who listened to the Bishop as if he heard the voice of God Himself, immediately obeyed, but still continued to live in the same place. In a short time the report of his holy and wonderful life was spread far and wide, and his desert home was no longer a solitary wilderness, for multitudes of people came from Persia, Armenia, Arabia, and even from the distant West, from Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Great Britain, bringing with them their sick and those who were possessed by evil spirits, and he cured them all.

But these continual visits and the honour that was daily given him by the pilgrims who strove to kiss his hands or to touch the hem of his garment, disturbed him in his communication with God. To escape their importunities, or rather to avoid these honours of which his humility made him consider himself unworthy, he built for himself a pillar six cubits high, on the top of which he dwelt. But even this was not sufficient to put himself beyond their reach, so he raised it first to twelve cubits, then to twenty, and finally to thirty-six.

Theodoret, who himself saw this high pillar, writes of our Saint in these words: "God, by a special Providence, permitted Simeon to live in this extraordinary manner, not only to lead lukewarm and negligent Christians to do penance by making them ashamed of the little penance they were doing for their sins in comparison with his, but also that the infidels who lived in darkness and in the shadow of death might by seeing his holy life receive the

light of the Faith, and might acknowledge Jesus Christ to be their Saviour."

His strange manner of living attracted the attention of the venerable Fathers who ruled over the various communities in the Eastern deserts. They assembled together to consult among themselves to see whether he was guided by God's Holy Spirit or by His own will.

They therefore, to try him, sent messengers to him with an order in these words: "The venerable Fathers of the desert have sent us to command you in their name, and by the authority which they hold from God over the solitaries of this desert, to come down from your pillar, and for the future to live like the other solitaries."

No sooner had the messenger finished speaking than Simeon rose up and prepared to descend. When they saw his ready obedience, they said, according to the orders they had received: "It is enough; continue to live as you are doing, for now we know that you are guided by the Spirit of God, and that it is He Who has inspired you to embrace this kind of life."

From his Life.

My child, God does not ask you to perform the great actions we read that the Saints sometimes performed, but He has placed their example before you, that in reading about them you may be encouraged to imitate them in your fidelity to do the little He asks of you. Jesus our Divine Master said that He had accomplished the Will of His Heavenly Father; the Saints endeavoured to do so also: it was this that made them Saints. Imitate them in this, and you also will become a Saint.

LVII

THE FOUR LAST THINGS

The Holy Ghost says to us in the Holy Scriptures (Ecclus. vii. 40): "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." Hence it is, my child, that the Church so often places these words before us in the instructions we receive, that we may never forget them, since so much depends upon them.

The four last things to be ever remembered are Death, Judgment, Hell, and Heaven.

I. On Death.

"It is appointed unto all men once to die." It is only by death that we can enter into eternity. The Kings and the great and rich ones of this world must all pass through this gate, as well as the lowliest and the poorest. O my child, this thought should inspire you, as it did the Saints of God, to live, not for this world, which you must so soon leave, but to gain the glory of Heaven hereafter, which will never end.

ST. FRANCIS BORGIA AT THE FUNERAL OF THE EMPRESS.

When St. Francis Borgia was a young man at the Court of the Empress Isabella of Spain, he took

great pleasure in the many honours that the world heaped upon him. He was, moreover, gay and handsome, and was held in high esteem by all the nobility of the kingdom.

But God, Who desired to raise his thoughts above all temporal things, gave him a lesson which made him see how vain and empty these things are, and which at once changed him from a noble courtier into a great Saint.

It happened when he was Duke of Candia that the Empress died. Francis, who had been one of her most intimate friends, and the most faithful servant of her Court, was chosen to accompany her remains to the place of interment, which was a long way off.

When the funeral cortège arrived at the place appointed, the coffin was opened, that everyone might know that it really contained her remains.

When this was done, the sight that met their eyes was terrible to behold. The countenance of the Empress, which during her lifetime had been the admiration of the whole of Europe, had become so ghastly that no one could look on it without a feeling of horror, and the odour which the fœtid corpse emitted was unsupportable.

When Francis was asked to identify the remains he exclaimed: "Yes, this is indeed the body of Isabella, my late mistress; but had I not been careful to accompany it throughout the whole journey, I should not now be able to certify that it really is the body of the Empress."

Then, turning towards the corpse that lay before him, he said: "Can this indeed be you, O beautiful

Isabella? Can this be all that is now left of my Empress and my Sovereign? What has become of those eyes that were once so lustrous? What has become of that majesty and that beauty that were the admiration of all Europe?"

The coffin was immediately closed, but Francis spent the whole of that night without sleeping. Prostrate on the floor of his room, the tears falling from his eyes, he thought of the vanity of all earthly things. "O my soul, what do you expect to find in this world? How long will you run after a vain shadow? Death, which has not spared even this great Empress, shall one day strike you also. True wisdom, then, tells you to despise the things of this world, and live only for God and Heaven, for which you were made."

From that moment he resolved to forsake the world, and live for that kingdom that never ends. His only thought was of Heaven; his only desire was for the day that would see the end of his trial on earth, so that he might enter his home there—that eternal kingdom which God has prepared for all who love and serve Him on earth.

THE DYING GENERAL.

There was once a great General who was lying on his death-bed, when an Ambassador came into his room, and told him that his country had, as a recompense for his faithful services, conferred on him the highest dignity that it could bestow. At the same time he handed him the certificate of the honour he had received.

The dying man looked on the illuminated diploma; then, turning towards the one who had presented it to him, said : " Yes, this is indeed very beautiful ; but tell me, my friend, what good it will do to me, or of what use it will be to me in the world to which I am going ?"

This great man died about six hours afterwards.

My child, these should also be your words when the world offers you anything to flatter your pride or vanity.

THE SPORTSMAN AND HIS DOG.

A sportsman one day sent his dog in pursuit of a hare. " Seize him ! seize him !" cried the sportsman.

The dog sprang forward, and after much running and fatigue, caught it and held it fast with his teeth.

The sportsman then took the dog by the ears, and cried out to it : " Let go ! let go !"

The dog immediately obeyed, and the sportsman put the hare into his game-bag.

A number of villagers had been looking on, and an old man who was among them said : " The children of this world are just like that dog. Temptation calls out to them, ' Seize it ! seize it !' and they obey. They pursue with all earnestness the pleasures and enjoyments of this life. At length death comes, and cries out to them : ' Let go ! let go !' and these wretched ones are obliged to obey, and at once to resign the riches they had gathered with so much labour, and never again to taste those pleasures on which they had set their hearts."

"O MY LORD, I COME!"

When the venerable John Deckers was near his end, he received the Last Sacraments with great fervour. From that moment until his last breath his only prayer was this: "Come, O Lord Jesus, come!"

At the moment of his death he said, "O my Lord, I come!" as if Our Lord, in answer to his prayer, had come to take him with Him to Heaven.

O my child, may your death be like unto his!

THE CONVERSION OF A MAN OF THE WORLD.

There was once a young man who was very rich, and who gave himself up to the pleasures of this world without restraint, and thought of nothing else all day long but of how he could best enjoy himself.

One day, during one of his many leisure hours, he thought within himself how very happy he was in having at his disposal everything he could desire. "Am I not one of the most happy of men?" he said to himself. "I possess a great fortune, and I can procure for myself whatever my heart may desire. I enjoy good health; I have many friends; and each day passes by as if it were a great festival.

"The only thing that troubles me is the thought that one day I must die, and after that I cannot enjoy these things any longer. O death, how bitter is the thought of thee! Thou art the only thing that comes between me and all my pleasures. Oh, if I could only enjoy this delicious life for ever! But no! that cannot be. I must die, and then

what will happen? What will become of me? What does my Faith teach me?"

When he had said this to himself, he recalled to mind the words that Abraham said to the rich man, as he lay tormented in the flames of Hell: "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented" (St. Luke xvi. 25).

"This, then, is what I must look forward to in the world to come! I must have either joy in this life for a few years, to be followed by an eternity of misery hereafter, or must embrace a life of penance in this present world, which will be rewarded by an eternal happiness in the world to come. Ah! surely it is better to live in this world, like Lazarus, in penance and afflictions, than to share the fate of the rich man in eternity. It is, indeed, better to purchase an endless happiness by a little self-denial here on earth than to be condemned to endless misery in eternity for the few short years of pleasures enjoyed in this world."

These thoughts were the beginning to him of a truly Christian life, which led him to a holy death and a happy eternity. May the same thought, my child, produce the same effects in your soul!

SCHOUPPE: *Instructions.*

THE HOLY MAN BASIL'S DESIRE TO DIE.

Surius relates that the holy Abbot Theodosius, knowing how salutary is the remembrance of death, one day ordered his religious to dig a grave in the garden of the monastery.

When this was accomplished, he assembled the brethren around the tomb, and said to them : " My children, look earnestly at this newly-dug grave. Who amongst us will be the first to lie there, and over whose remains shall we first have to pray ?"

Then one of them, whose name was Basil, drawing near to his Superior, said to him : " My Father, give me your blessing. I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, and I hope that I may be the first one to occupy it." After some hesitation the Abbot gave him his benediction, and ordered that the office of the Church for the repose of the souls of the departed should be solemnly sung, with all the ceremonies appointed for the burial of the faithful.

This was done on the first, the third, and the ninth day ; and on the last day, when the prayers were ended, Basil, who at the moment enjoyed good health, and had no fever nor illness, passed suddenly out of this world to a better, similar to a man falling into a pleasant sleep.

And thus he passed away, to receive in Heaven the recompense of his virtuous life, and of that ardent desire he always possessed of being for ever united to God.

SURIUS : *Vitæ SS.*

ST. BERNARD ON HIS DEATH-BED.

At the beginning of the year 1153 St. Bernard was so ill that he knew he must soon die. Though suffering great pain and very weak, he said Mass every day. " The best way to die well," he said, " is to offer oneself up to God along with Jesus on the holy altar."

His spiritual children were filled with grief when

they saw him so ill. With great fervour and many tears, they asked of God not to take from them a Father whom they all loved so dearly. God heard their prayers; Bernard became daily stronger, and his pains left him.

When he saw what their prayers had done, he sent for them, and with a loving but sorrowful accent said to them: "O my children, why have you snatched me from death? Why would you keep any longer on earth one so wretched as I am? Your prayers have taken away from me that which I longed for so earnestly. Oh, I beg of you, my children, let me die, that I may go to my God!"

"O beloved Father," they cried, while sobbing, "will you, then, leave us? Oh, take pity on your children whom you have nourished by your holy counsels, and whom you have brought up as a tender father! What will become of us if you depart from us?"

These affectionate words moved the heart of the servant of God, and he wept. "I know not," said he, raising up his eyes to Heaven—"I know not to which I ought to yield—to the love of my children, which urges me to stay here, or to the love of God, which draws me towards Him."

These were his last words. He calmly yielded up his soul to God on August 20, 1153, in the sixty-third year of his age.

THE LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH OF ST. ODILO.

On Christmas Eve, in the year 1048, seeing that his end was drawing near, St. Odilo, Abbot of Cluny, caused himself to be carried to the church,

where he preached a beautiful discourse on the birth of Our Divine Lord. When it was ended, he told his disciples that these were the last words he would speak to them, and exhorted them to greater fervour in the service of God, and to pray for the grace of perseverance.

He lingered until the Festival of the Circumcision. When he was about to expire, the brethren spread a mat upon the floor and covered it with ashes, as he had commanded them. Then they gently laid him upon it. He looked once more on the brethren weeping around him, as if to bid them a last farewell, and then, with his eyes fixed on the Cross, he calmly expired, and went to receive in Heaven the reward of his long and holy life.

That same night, when the body was carried into the church, it happened that one of the religious, whose name was Gregory, to whom were entrusted the preparations for the funeral, being fatigued, lay down to rest in the cell in which the holy Abbot had died.

As soon as he lay down, he beheld standing before him the Saint himself. "O my Father and master," he exclaimed, "how fares it with thee in eternity?"

"I am happy, my child," he answered, "for my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was pleased to be at my side to defend me. At the hour of my departure I beheld in that corner of the cell (and he pointed to the place) a hideous and terrible phantom, set up by Satan to fill me with fear and despair at that tremendous moment; but, thanks be to God, Who stood by me and defended me, I suffered no harm from it."

THE HAPPY DEATH OF ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND.

About the year 1093 William Rufus, who succeeded William the Conqueror on the English throne, sent an army to Northumberland, and attacked the Castle of Alnwick. After a short struggle it was captured, and all the garrison put to death.

When Malcolm heard of this act of treachery and of the cruelty of the English commander, he sent ambassadors to the King to demand from him the restitution of the castle, but they received a stern refusal. Then the King of Scotland, placing himself at the head of his army, marched in haste to the borders, and surrounded the fortress on every side before the usurpers knew of his presence, and cut off all supplies.

Margaret tried to keep her husband from going in person to Alnwick. She seemed to foresee that some evil would befall him. For the first time in his life he did not obey her, for he thought it was her affection for him that made her try to keep him at home.

"Be not afraid for me," he said; "in a short time I shall return in triumph, and we shall rejoice together over our victory."

Margaret did not answer; she laid her head upon his bosom, and prayed to her Heavenly Father: "O my God, if it be possible let this chalice pass from me."

As soon as the King, with his two sons, Edward and Edgar, had bid her adieu, the Queen retired to her oratory to pray for them, and to obtain the strength she needed to support the trials which she knew were to fall heavily upon her.

Her health now began to give way under the many

labours of her active and penitential life. She saw that her end was at hand, and she prepared herself for it with great fervour.

" Margaret knew by an inspiration from God when she was to die, a long time before that day came." It is Theodoric, her Confessor, himself who gives us this account of her holy death. " She sent for me," he continues, " that I might come and speak with her in private. Then she made a general Confession of her whole life. So great was her sorrow that tears fell in torrents from her eyes at every word she said, and I myself could not keep from weeping. At times her grief was so great, and her sighs so frequent, that she could not speak at all. I also, like herself, could not speak on account of my emotion.

" At length she said : ' Farewell, my Father, farewell. I have not now a long time to live, but you shall survive me. I have two favours to ask of you : the first is that in your prayers and at Holy Mass you will remember me as long as you live ; and the second is that you will take a fatherly care of my sons and daughters when I am gone, teaching them to fear God and to love Him above all things.

" ' Continue always to instruct them in their holy Faith, and when you see any of my sons raised up to the height of earthly greatness, oh, be to him in an especial manner a father and teacher. Warn him, and, if need be, reprove him, lest the fading honours of this world tempt him to be proud or to sin against God, or lest the goods of this life cause him to forget those of eternity. You must promise me, my Father, to attend to these things in the presence of Him Who is our only witness.'

"Still weeping, I promised to fulfil her requests, and then I left her. I never again saw her in life."

In the meantime Malcolm was at the head of his army before the walls of Alnwick. The enemy were hemmed in on all sides, and were dying of hunger. The Governor saw nothing before him but death or surrender, when by another act of treachery he suddenly obtained his liberation.

Under the pretence of restoring the castle to Malcolm, he rode towards him with the keys hanging from the point of his spear. Malcolm, without any suspicion of evil, went forward to receive them. But when he drew near, the treacherous Governor suddenly thrust his spear into the right eye of the King, causing him to die on the spot. Edward, his son, seeing what had happened, rushed forward to his father's rescue, and was also slain.

This sad event filled the Scottish army with consternation. They at once gave up the siege, and returned home to spread on all sides the news of the terrible disaster.

Edgar took up the bodies of his father and brother, and buried them at Tynemouth, till they should be removed to Dunfermline, and then departed in haste to break the sad tidings to his mother.

While these things were taking place at Alnwick, Margaret was calmly awaiting the hour of her death in the Castle of Edinburgh.

At the moment when the King was slain an unusual paleness suddenly overspread her countenance, and she began to tremble. Tears ran down her cheeks, and she joined her hands together, as if

enduring some terrible agony. Her attendants were alarmed, and asked her what had happened to her.

Margaret answered: "Alas! to-day has perhaps befallen Scotland a more terrible evil than has happened to it for a long time." Those around her did not then understand what she meant; but afterwards, when the sad news of the King's death reached them, they remembered her words, and knew that God had revealed to her the death of her husband at the moment it had taken place.

On the morning of the fourth day after the murder of the King she became somewhat better. She entered her oratory to hear Mass, and to strengthen herself for her departure from this world by receiving once more the Body and Blood of her Divine Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist. When Mass was over, the illness returned, and her attendants had to carry her back to her room.

This was on the morning of November 16, 1093. She saw her end was near, and she asked her chaplain to read the Prayers for the Departing Soul. Her agony then began, and her pain increased every moment.

"What shall I do?" she exclaimed; "why do I linger in this world? Can I put off death when it is at hand, or prolong life that I should be so afraid to die? All flesh is as grass: the grass is withered, and the flower thereof is fallen away."

Among the treasures she had brought from England was a black Crucifix; it had belonged to the saintly Edward, her grand-uncle, and was enclosed in a precious casket. It was called the Black Rood. She ordered it to be brought to her, that she might

once more look on the wounds of her beloved Saviour, and die with it in her hands.

When it was brought in, there was some delay in opening the casket. Margaret, perceiving this, said : " Wretched sinner that I am, I am not worthy to look again on the Holy Cross."

When at length it was brought, the dying Queen clasped it in her hands, now cold in death, pressed it to her lips with the deepest reverence, and began to say in a clear voice the Psalm *Miserere*. Gradually her voice became weaker, and soon could not be heard. The assistants began the prayers for those who are expiring.

At this moment the door of the room suddenly opened, and Edgar her son rushed in and threw himself into her arms. He had just returned from the graves of his father and brother at Tynemouth to find his mother at the point of death.

Margaret, collecting her remaining strength, said to him : " O Edgar, my son, speak to me ; tell me, how fares it with your father and my darling Edward. How are they ?"

But Edgar did not speak. He was afraid to tell her what had happened, because he thought it would hasten her death. He only answered : " They are well."

Margaret sighed. " My son," she said, " by this Most Holy Cross, and by the love you bear your mother, I beseech you, tell me all."

But Edgar still hesitated. " Ah, I know it," she continued ; " I know it all."

Then he told her the truth. Lifting up her eyes and hands to Heaven, she said : " Thanks and praise

be given to Thee, O Lord Almighty, Whose will it is that I should suffer this anguish at my departure, that so, as I hope, I may be more and more purified from my sins before I appear before Thee."

The Queen's last hour had now come. Once more pressing the sacred Crucifix to her lips, she said: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Who by the will of the Father and through the power of the Holy Ghost hast by Thy death given life to the world, deliver me. . . ."

With these words of hope on her lips her holy soul went to receive from her Father in Heaven the reward of a life of heroic sacrifices and of labours accomplished for love of Him.

Her body was carried, as she had desired, to the church at Dunfermline which she had built, and deposited in front of the high altar. She was canonized by Innocent IV. in the year 1251, and her feast is celebrated on June 10 (in Scotland on November 16).

THE THREE LAST WORDS.

In the reign of King Henry VIII. of England there was a gentleman who lived a worldly life, and gave great scandal by his many crimes. The Blessed Thomas More, who knew him, went to him one day, and begged of him, for the love of God, to cease his evil life and do penance.

"Oh, don't be alarmed about me," replied the man; "I shall one day repent, and so get to Heaven. There are three words that I will always keep in mind, and these three words will obtain for me God's pardon even at the last moment of my life."

The Blessed Thomas asked him what these three powerful words were.

The gentleman answered: "They are these: 'Lord, pardon me.'"

"Ah, my friend," said the Blessed Thomas, "take care, for you may still lose your soul; God does not pardon obstinate sinners." But these words were lost on the unfortunate man. He continued to live in sin as before.

It happened not long afterwards that, being on horseback, he had occasion to pass over a bridge that spanned a deep and rapid river. Something caused the horse to start; it gave one great bound, and sprang with its rider over the parapet into the river. Now was the time for the man to pronounce the three words he had reserved in his mind for such an occasion. He was indeed heard to utter three words, but they were very different from the ones he had spoken to Blessed Thomas More. He cried out: "May the devil——" He did not end the sentence, for at that moment he plunged into the deep waters beneath, and was never again seen alive. Such is the sad end of those who live in sin.

"O GOD, GIVE ME MORE TIME."

We read of a certain worldly man who had neglected all his lifetime to serve God, and had not attended to his religious duties.

But the hour of his death came, and when he saw that he was really about to die he could scarcely believe it. "Surely I am not going to die!" he cried out. "Oh, no, no! not yet, not yet!" But the weakness which had come upon him, and the sad looks of those who stood around him, plainly told him that the end was near.

Then the thought of how he had been made for God came into his mind, and how he had lived in total forgetfulness of Him. He then remembered that God had sent him into this world to serve Him, and he was obliged to acknowledge that he had not done so, and he became suddenly filled with great fear.

"Oh, what shall I do now? O God, give me some more time to live!"

But his conscience answered him: "God gave you plenty of time, and you know how you have spent it; there is now no more time for you."

Then he fell into despair and died, and so passed immediately to the Judgment Seat of God unprepared, because he neglected to think of death when he was in health. May God preserve you, my child, from such an end!

Death is terrible for all, even for the Saints themselves, and we read of some of them who trembled with fear when they were on the point of leaving this world, for they thought that they had not loved and served God sufficiently well.

II. On Judgment.

My child, "it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment." At the moment of your death you also shall have to appear before God to give a strict account of every thought, word, and deed of your whole life, and to receive the sentence that shall place you for ever with God in Paradise or with the Evil Spirit in Hell.

THE TERRIBLE DREAM.

St. Vincent Ferier relates that a certain young man had a dream, in which he imagined that he was brought before the tribunal of God to be judged. So terrible was the scene he witnessed—the majesty of the Sovereign Judge, the different questions put to him to which he could make no reply—that on his awakening in the morning he found himself trembling with agitation and covered with a cold sweat.

His first thought was to thank Jesus Christ that it had not been a reality, but only a dream. But at the same time he said to himself : " What I have seen in my dream will one day be a reality ; I cannot escape it ; perhaps, too, it may be soon, even this very day."

He at once asked God to forgive him the sins of his past life, and took the resolution to lead, from that hour, a life of penance, and rather to die than ever again to commit a sin.

The effect of his dream extended even to his body, for his countenance ever afterwards was grave and sad, and his hair became white as snow.

THEODORE, THE DYING STUDENT.

A young man called Theodore had been placed for his education in a certain monastery in Italy. Instead of leading a holy life there, he yielded to his passions, and fixed his heart on worldly enjoyments.

But in the midst of his sinful life he was struck down by a plague which at that time was devastating Rome. While the monks were standing round him to assist him in his last moments, he suddenly began

to cry out : " Go away from me ; leave me to my fate, for I am already delivered up to the Evil One. See, he has even now begun to torture me with his fiery breath."

At these words the trembling monks said to him : " O brother, what are you saying ? Arm yourself with the sign of the Cross, that the enemy may fly away from you."

" Oh, I cannot do that ; I cannot even move my arm."

The monks then knelt down in prayer, and with sighs and tears besought God to have mercy on the unhappy youth.

Theodore then grew calm. " Thanks be to God," he at length exclaimed, " the Evil One, frightened by your prayers, has taken to flight. Oh, I wish now to be converted, and turn from my sinful life. Oh, if God should only spare me, I will become a Saint. What a terrible thing it is to have to appear before God to be judged after a life spent in offending Him !"

He kept his word, for, God having allowed him to recover, he became the model of a true penitent, and having for many years been tried in the furnace of affliction, he died a holy death.

But when one has tried to serve God faithfully, he has reason to hope that Jesus, the just Judge, will show him mercy according to His promise.

THE SEVEN ANGELS AND THE DYING MAN.

Long ago a poor man lay dying by the wayside. There was no one near him ; the bare earth was his only bed, and a hard stone his pillow.

In his youth he had learned in his Catechism the rewards God bestows on those who lay up for themselves treasures in Heaven by being good to the poor. "God has promised," he said, "never to forsake those who put their trust in Him."

But as he thus lay by the wayside alone, with no one to speak to him or to help him in his last moments, he began to think that God had forsaken him, and that, on account of his sins, he had forfeited all right to the promised reward.

This thought filled him with sadness, and he prayed that God would forgive him his many sins, and show him mercy when He called him to His Judgment Seat.

Suddenly a beautiful sight met his eyes. Seven angels clad in garments of the brightest hues, and shining like the sun, stood around him.

"Who are you, O beautiful spirits of God, and why do you come here?" he said.

The first one made answer: "I was hungry, and you gave me to eat."

The second said: "I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink."

The third continued: "I was naked, and you clothed me."

The fourth: "I was a stranger, and you took me in."

The fifth: "I was in prison, and you visited me."

The sixth: "I was sick, and you came to comfort me."

And the seventh: "When I was dead you buried me."

The dying man now remembered the good works

he had done to the poor and the needy, and he saw now that they were to stand in bright array around the Judgment Seat, and plead for him, and his sad heart was again filled with sweet confidence.

And as he thought on these things, and gazed steadfastly at the beautiful vision, a still more magnificent sight met his eyes. The heavens above him seemed to open, and Jesus Himself appeared surrounded by His holy angels. With His gentle voice which is the joy of the elect, He said : " Whatever you have done unto even the least of My brethren, you have done it unto Me. Come now, and receive the reward which I have prepared for you."

At these words the holy man breathed his last, and the seven angels bore his soul with them to Heaven.

ST. MARY MAGDALEN OF PAZZI'S FEAR OF THE JUDGMENT.

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi had been a Saint from her earliest years. When she was lying dying, she one day sent in great haste for her Confessor.

" O Father," she cried out as soon as he entered, " I have been thinking about the terrible judgment of God ; I am frightened. Do you think it possible that I can be saved ?"

The priest answered : " Yes, my child, I hope—nay, I am full of confidence that you will reach the Kingdom of Heaven. But what makes you ask such a question ? What is it that fills you with so much fear ?"

" I have been meditating on the terrible judgments of God ; they are so different from ours. My

day of judgment must now come soon; what a terrible thing it is to have to stand alone before the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ, and to be examined so minutely on everything I have ever said or done, or even thought of, and the omissions also of my whole lifetime! What a terrible moment! Have I not reason to be afraid?" *From her Life.*

THE HOLY MONK, PETER OF DUME.

Towards the middle of the fifteenth century a young man went to the gate of a Carthusian monastery not far from Gand, and asked to be admitted as a monk. His name was Peter of Dume. The Superior received him with great kindness, and after the usual probation gave him the holy habit of the Order. He persevered in his vocation till his happy death, which took place in the year 1490.

During all the many years he spent in that monastery he was never seen to smile, and an unwonted earnestness accompanied every one of his actions.

It was a long time before the Superior discovered the cause of this, but, being commanded to make it known to him, the monk, in virtue of obedience, related to him the reason of it in these words:

"I was passing through that part of the country which is watered by the deep River Escaut, and in crossing over it I fell into the water, and sank to the bottom. I felt that I was drowning, and that in a few moments I should be in eternity. I at once was seized with a great fear as I thought of the terrible judgment of God which I was so soon to undergo, especially as I was thus called out of life so suddenly

without time to make any preparation. I thought of Mary, my Mother in Heaven, and I prayed to her. 'O Mary, Our Lady of Good Help, come to my assistance,' I said to her.

"My prayer was not in vain. At that same moment I felt myself lifted from the bottom of the river and laid upon the bank. As soon as I saw that I was preserved from death, I fell on my knees to thank God and my heavenly patroness. Then I took the resolution to spend the rest of my life in preparing myself for a happy death, and on that very day I came to this house, that I might immediately begin to fulfil my resolution.

"I also at the same time resolved to spend the remainder of my days in the service of Mary the Mother of God, to show my gratitude to her for her maternal protection, and for having saved me from certain death, and I desire to make my whole life a hymn of thanksgiving to her for my miraculous preservation."

This holy religious, who was little known by men (for it was his continual prayer that he should live unknown to the world), died in the odour of sanctity on March 1, 1490. *Lives of the Saints*, March 1.

ST. ATHANASIA AT THE HOUR OF DEATH.

When St. Athanasia was near her death, the sisterhood knelt around her, shedding many tears. They said to her: "O Mother, do not forget us, your children, but when you enter Heaven pray to God for us."

The dying Saint answered: "Ah, my daughters, do not speak in that way, but do you rather pray for

me, for I tremble at the thought that I am so soon to appear before Jesus Christ to be judged—Jesus, Who has loved me so much, and for whom I have done so little."

III. On Hell.

My child, God made you to be for ever happy with Him in Heaven. The happiness of the blessed consists chiefly in seeing God, Who is infinitely beautiful. But those who do not serve God in this world shall never see Him in Heaven. They shall be banished for ever from their home, and from the presence of their Father there, to suffer in Hell with Satan and his wicked angels. Oh, what a terrible punishment!

VICTORINE'S RESOLUTION.

There was in the South of France a little girl whose father was a blacksmith. In her father's forge there always burned a great fire, which sometimes gave forth so much heat that she could not go near it.

One day her father had some work to do that required a greater and more intense fire than ever she saw before. The whole forge seemed to be one mass of fire. Victorine stood at a great distance, and gazed on it with terror. "O my God," she exclaimed, "if this fire which my father has kindled is so terrible to look at, how terrible must be the fire of Hell, which God in His anger has kindled for the punishment of sin!

"Oh, what an awful thing it must be to be condemned to Hell for ever! To be for ever burning

along with the wicked angels, never to see God, our dear Father in Heaven—never, never!

"O my God, from this moment I take the resolution never to commit sin. The thought of Hell will always check me when I am tempted to do evil, and make me accept with resignation every evil that can befall me in this world, rather than break Thy commandments."

Victorine is still living, and she has till now faithfully kept her resolution. My child, imitate her good example.

THE HERMIT'S ANSWER.

An ancient Father, who had for a long lifetime led a solitary life in the midst of a vast wilderness in the practice of extraordinary penances and continual labours, was one day visited by some of his brethren. After admiring his patience and perseverance, they said to him: "O Father, how are you able to endure the many sufferings and privations of this frightful solitude?"

"My brethren," he said, "all the labours and sufferings of the many years I have been here are as nothing when compared to one hour of sufferings in Hell-fire. Therefore, in order to escape them, I cheerfully undergo the hardships and labours of the short time of my mortal life."

It is impossible for anyone in this world to imagine the greatness of the punishments God has prepared for those who do not love Him during their trial on earth.

THE ETERNAL LOSS OF GOD.

In the days of the early persecutions St. James Intercisus was brought before the cruel tyrant, Sapor, was ordered to offer sacrifice to the pagan idols, and was threatened with a most awful death if he refused.

At first he bravely declared that he would not obey the orders of the tyrant, but when the executioners were commanded to torture him and put him to death, he began to be afraid, and in the end consented to do what was asked of him if only they would not kill him.

His wife and his son-in-law, who were present at his trial, were filled with the most bitter grief at his apostasy, and, bidding him an eternal adieu, fled from the place.

James, who had a deep and ardent love for them, was struck with intense dismay as he saw them depart, and, full of sorrow for his sinful weakness, cried out: "O vile wretch that I am! If to be forsaken by my wife and those who are dear to me on earth fills me with so much sadness, how intensely greater will be my grief when God my Heavenly Father casts me for ever from His sight? For has not Jesus Christ said: "He who denies me before men, him will I deny before My Father Who is in Heaven"?

Saying these words, he returned to the tribunal of the Prince, and boldly offered himself to die, saying: "I will never deny my God."

He was at once seized by the executioners and put to death, and is now in possession of the martyr's crown in Heaven. *Lives of the Saints.*

SATAN'S ANSWER.

A holy priest was once casting the Devil out of a man who was possessed, and while he was doing so he said to him: "In the Name of God tell me what are the punishments the wicked suffer in Hell?"

Satan answered: "The punishments the lost suffer in Hell are a continual burning in an abyss of fire, remorse, and despair; but the greatest of all is not to be able to see God, Who made them, and Whom by their own fault they have lost."

"What would you now do to be able to obtain the opportunity of re-entering God's grace?"

"I would willingly suffer all the torments of Hell for ten thousand years, if I could only see God for one moment, and if I had a body like you I would be always at His feet begging for mercy. Oh, if men only knew what it is to lose the grace of God!"

IV. On Heaven.

My child, the Apostle St. Paul, who was "rapt even to the third heaven, and who heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter," declares to us that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." Oh, with how much comfort do these words fill the heart of a child of God in his trials and sufferings on earth!

ST. PIONIUS THE MARTYR.

When the pagans were leading St. Pionius to the place of martyrdom, they were surprised to see the

joy that lighted up his countenance, and how eagerly he ran towards the place of his death.

"What makes you so happy?" they asked him, "and why do you run forward with so much eagerness to death?"

"You are mistaken," answered the martyr; "I am not going to die; I am about to begin a life that will never end."

This is how the Saints spoke of what the world calls death.

HOME AGAIN.

A vessel was returning home after a cruise of many years. As soon as it came near the coast, not only the passengers, but even the sailors, were filled with unutterable joy.

The nearer they came to the shore the more excited they became. Some stood all alone speaking to themselves, others laughed, and some wept for joy. They all stood gazing at the land, and never seemed to weary of looking on the verdure of the hills and the foliage of the trees, and the rocks on the shore. All these objects were dear and sacred in their eyes. It was their home, their native land. And as they came nearer and saw the houses where those lived who were dear to them they could not contain themselves for joy.

At length when the ship entered the harbour, and when they saw on shore their fathers, their mothers, their wives, their children, their brothers, their sisters, and their friends, stretching out their hands to welcome them, laughing and weeping for joy, and calling them by their names, it was impossible to

keep even one of them on board. They all leapt on shore, and the crew of another ship had to be employed to do the work of the vessel.

If even in this world there is so much joy at meeting those we love, what will be the joy of the just in Paradise when they meet there those whom they loved on earth, never again to be separated from them!

CYRUS AND HIS SOLDIERS.

Cyrus, King of Persia, had declared war against the Assyrians, and, to encourage his soldiers to fight bravely, he one morning led them to a great forest, and giving an axe to each of them, he said: "My friends, this forest must be cut down to-day. Be not dismayed at the number and size of the trees, but set to work with great energy, and you will easily accomplish it. As a reward for your labours, you shall to-morrow sit along with me at a magnificent banquet, and shall partake of other pleasures I have in store for you."

These words filled them with great determination, and before evening all the trees were lying on the ground.

Next day the soldiers received the promised reward, and in the middle of the feast Cyrus asked them what they now thought of the fatigues of the previous day.

"We have forgotten all about them," they answered.

"Would you begin again to-morrow the same work on the same conditions?" asked Cyrus.

"Most willingly," they all replied.

" Then to-morrow you must go forth to attack the Assyrians. You will overthrow them as easily as you did the trees yesterday, and when the battle is ended you will taste the joys of victory. That will be a feast which will continue all your lifetime, and the riches which you will take from the enemy will be your own."

These words animated the soldiers with great courage. They fought like lions against the enemy, and gained a brilliant victory.

ST. PACIFICUS.

When St. Pacificus was a little boy, he used to wonder why most of the people he saw around him were so much taken up with earthly things, and thought so little of Heaven.

" Oh, how foolish are they !" he used to say. " They place their hearts on these things, which perhaps to-morrow they must leave for ever." Then, raising up his eyes towards Heaven, he would cry : " O Heaven, Heaven ! the things of this world pass so quickly away, and the things in Heaven remain for ever. Oh, if people would only remember what Heaven means !"

Sometimes the Devil used to tempt him, and put thoughts before his mind to try to make him commit sin. But the holy child instantly drove them away , saying : " Never will I do such a thing ! If I were to do what you want me, I should lose Heaven. No ; I will never put myself in that danger."

Another day he heard the sound of beautiful music. God was pleased to let him hear a few strains of the music sung by the blessed before the throne of God

When it was ended he cried out: "Oh, what will Heaven itself be, since even the music of Heaven is so delightful!"

O my child, keep this thought, then, before your mind, and, like St. Pacificus you will never sin, and will one day enjoy this eternal happiness.

On the first day of November the Church of God throughout the world celebrates a great festival; it is called "All Saints'," because on that day we are called upon to meditate on the glory of the Saints in Heaven, and on how they spent their lives while in this world, that we, who are now on our trial, may by imitating their example one day obtain the reward they now enjoy.

VISION OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

"I saw a great multitude," he said, "which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues: standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: and they cried with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation to our God, Who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.' And all the angels stood round the throne, and the ancients and the four living creatures: and they fell down before the throne upon their faces, and adored God, saying: 'Amen. Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honour, and power, and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen.'

"And one of the ancients answered, and said to me: 'These that are clothed in white robes, who are they? and whence came they?'

"And I said to him: 'My Lord, thou knowest.'

"And he said to me: 'These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and they serve Him day and night in His temple: and He, that sitteth on the throne, shall dwell over them. They shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'" *Apoc.* vii. 9 *et seq.*

WHAT THE ABBOT SALVI SAW IN HEAVEN.

St. Gregory of Tours relates that the holy Abbot Salvi, after a long and pious life, passed out of this world amidst the tears of the religious and of his widowed mother.

The morning after his death, while they were making preparation for his funeral, to the great surprise of all the people, the deceased Abbot was seen to move in his coffin, and to rise up as if from a heavy sleep.

He at once raised his eyes towards Heaven, and stretched out his hands, crying out: "O merciful God, what have you done? Why have you allowed me to come back again to the darkness of this weary world? I would have so much preferred to remain with You in Heaven than to be again on earth."

For three days he would neither eat nor drink, and there was a look of great sadness on his countenance.

On the third day he assembled around him all the

brethren of the monastery and his mother, and said : " My dearest friends, believe me when I tell you that everything you see in this world is nothingness. Solomon indeed spoke the truth when he said : ' All is vanity.' Happy, happy is that one who so lives here on earth as to secure for himself the happiness of seeing God in eternity."

" Tell us, dearest Father," said the monks, " tell us what you have seen."

" Four days ago," began the Abbot, " when you saw me expire, two angels carried my soul into Heaven. I seemed to see far beneath me the world full of men, and the sun and the moon, and the stars, and the clouds. We reached a gate more brilliant than the sun, and I was brought through it into a dwelling-place which seemed to be paved with the purest gold and silver, full of the most beautiful light, and of great dimensions.

" This magnificent palace was filled with a multitude of men and women so great that I could not count their number. When they saw me enter I was welcomed with the greatest joy by men who were clothed in robes of glory.

" While I was wondering in my mind who these were, my two angelic companions said to me : ' These are the martyrs and confessors, who, while on earth, served God most faithfully.'

" Then they assigned a place to me amongst them, and very soon it seemed that I was surrounded by a perfume so exquisite that I needed nothing more to make me perfectly happy.

" As I was beginning to enjoy all this, I heard a voice near me, saying : ' Let him be sent back again

for a time into the world, because the Church hath need of him.'

" I heard these words, but could not see the One Who said them. I at once threw myself on the floor of the temple and with tears streaming from my eyes I cried out : ' Alas ! alas ! O Lord ! O Lord ! why have You shown all these beautiful things to me, and then deprived me of them ? You send me away from You back into the world again and thus You expose me to the danger of losing all and of never coming back here again. O my God, I ask You in Your mercy to let me remain here, lest, in returning to the world, I should fall into mortal sin, and so lose my soul.'

" But the same voice said to me : ' Go in peace ; I will protect you till such time as I take you back here again.'

" Then my angelic companions left me, and I returned by the gate through which I entered, and immediately found myself again where I am now."

Life of St. Salvi.

THE STORY OF JOSAPHAT.

A Prince whose name was Josaphat had lost his way in a forest while hunting.

Suddenly he heard someone at a little distance singing sweetly. Surprised to hear so lovely a voice in so lonely a place, he rode towards the spot from which the sound seemed to come.

As he drew near, his surprise became still greater, for he found that the voice which had charmed him so much was that of a poor leper whose body was in the last stage of decay.

When he reached the place where the poor man stood, he said to him : " My friend, how can you have the courage to sing in the dreadful condition in which you are ?"

" My lord," replied the leper, " I have every reason to rejoice. I have lived in this world for forty years. During all that time my soul has been confined in this miserable body as in a prison. The walls of this prison are now, as you see, falling to pieces, and my soul, set free from these ruins, will soon take its flight towards God to enjoy in His company eternal happiness. I am so overjoyed at this thought that I cannot help raising my voice to Heaven to praise God on this happy day of my deliverance."

Like this good man, we should keep our eyes fixed on Heaven, and sigh after the moment when our soul, released from the prison of the body, will go into the presence of God our Heavenly Father.

MRS. HERBERT.

HEAVEN OUR HOME.

In the Life of the holy martyr Pamphilius we read that many pagans who saw the great joy that filled the Christians, when they were condemned to die for Jesus Christ, wondered how they could be so happy. And when they were told that it was because they were so soon to see God in Heaven, and to enjoy the happiness God had prepared for them, they also wished to become Christians, that they might share in that happiness. It was in this way that God brought them into His holy Church.

They had not long to wait for the martyr's crown,

for the Prefect of Cæsarea, hearing of what had taken place, sent soldiers to bring them before him.

One of the first questions he put to them was: "What country do you belong to?"

"Our country is Heaven," was the answer; "it is there where our God and our Saviour dwells: when He had suffered and died for us, and rose again from the dead, He went up to Heaven to prepare a place for us. So Heaven is our home."

The Prefect was very angry at the tone of confidence in which they said these words, and commanded them to suffer the most inhuman tortures.

But the holy martyrs were not frightened. They kept their eyes constantly fixed on Heaven, and encouraged each other with these words: "In Heaven is our God and our Saviour; Heaven is our country, Heaven is our home; let us take courage; we shall soon be there." And thus they persevered to the end.

Life of St. Pamphilius.

Heaven is also your home, my child. Jesus has prepared a place for you there as well as for them. Keep your eyes, then, always on Heaven, and remember that Jesus is calling on you to follow Him, and you will also persevere. When the afflictions of this short life are ended, you will be eternally happy there, along with the holy martyrs and all the Saints of God.

LVIII

THE CHRISTIAN'S RULE OF LIFE

I. How a Christian must Live in order to save his Soul.

My child, if you desire to save your soul, you must follow the rule of life taught by Jesus Christ, Who came down from Heaven to teach you the way to Heaven. To follow Christ is to walk in His footsteps by an imitation of His virtues, and, like Him, to be meek and humble of heart, to be obedient unto death, and to seek to do in all things the Will of His Father.

"follow me."

Agnes was a little girl who was trying to be very good. But like other children she had her faults, and, although they were not very great, they had to be corrected.

One night she had a dream which did more to correct her faults than all the good advice which her mother gave her.

She dreamed that she was wandering through a thick forest, and had lost her way. She looked on all sides to find some path which would lead her to her home, but she did not see any. The night was

coming on, and the cold wind began to blow fiercely among the trees. She also heard the cries of wild beasts not far distant, and this filled her with great fear.

In her loneliness and danger she fell upon her knees, and joining her little hands together, and raising up her weeping eyes to Heaven, prayed thus to her Heavenly Father: "O my God, I am lost in this great forest, and I am very much afraid. Perhaps some wild beast may come and eat me, or some robber may carry me away, or I may die of hunger. O my Jesus, since Thou dost love Thy little children so much, come and save me."

At that instant she saw near her a beautiful little Boy with a heavy cross upon His shoulder. He had on His head a crown of thorns, the points of which pierced His temples, and caused the blood to trickle down His cheeks. He seemed also to be trembling with cold, for He was thinly clad.

Agnes knew at once Who it was, and running up to Him, fell down at His feet and earnestly said to Him: "O Jesus, take me with Thee, so that I may get out of this forest, and may again see my good parents."

"Follow Me, then," said the Divine Child.

Agnes followed Him in silence. She no longer complained of the sharp stones that hurt her tender feet, nor was she now afraid of wild beasts or robbers, because Jesus was with her. In a short time He led her out of the woods into a beautiful field, where there was a great multitude of angels clad in white, and singing joyfully. Agnes fell at His feet to thank Him, but He raised her up gently, and, embracing

her, told her that because she had followed Him so lovingly He would make her dwell in this beautiful place for ever with His angels.

Agnes awoke, and from that moment she became the faithful imitator of the Child Jesus. She is now dead, but her happy soul must be with God in Heaven, since she served Him so faithfully.

It is not difficult to follow Christ. He Himself says: "My yoke is sweet and My burden light." This the Saints found by experience. They became imitators of Jesus Christ, and they are now with Him in Heaven. Could you not do as they did, my child?

HOW ST. AUGUSTINE BECAME A SAINT.

One day St. Augustine was reading the "Lives of the Saints." He saw how carefully they had kept the commandments of God, and how God had rewarded them by giving them the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Were not these who have won their crowns in Paradise of the same nature as I am?" he said to himself. "They were of the same flesh and blood, and were subject to the same infirmities as I am. Yet they were able to keep God's commandments; they were able to bear the yoke of Christ; they were able to overcome the world and to persevere to the end. Why cannot I do what they did?"

St. Augustine at once began to live as they did; he became a true disciple of Jesus Christ, and is now in Heaven with God. O my child, live as the Saints did; imitate Our Divine Lord Jesus as they did, and you too shall become a Saint.

THE LESSON PUT IN PRACTICE.

A young man who was remarkable for his piety, although he was obliged to live amongst those who were very worldly, was once asked what he did to keep himself from sin.

He answered : " When I was a little boy about ten years of age, I was present at an instruction the priest gave us on how we were to do all for Jesus, and with Jesus. He said to us : ' When you awake in the morning, think that the Child Jesus is beside you, and say to Him : " O my Jesus, may I do all things this day to please Thee !" then begin at once to do all your actions as He did them when on earth.

" ' When you say your prayers, think that Jesus is kneeling beside you, and adoring His Heavenly Father, and your prayers will be well said.

" ' When you are at your work, think of Jesus labouring and toiling for His daily bread ; and when you are tired and weary, the thought that Jesus was once tired and weary also will enable you to bear all with resignation.

" ' When you are told to do something, imagine that you hear Our Lady and St. Joseph telling the Divine Child Jesus to do the same, and consider how diligently He obeyed them, and you will find it easy to be obedient.

" ' When you have to suffer, recall to mind the sufferings of Jesus for you, and you will obtain patience to suffer for Him.'

" I have never forgotten that instruction," continued the young man, " and in everything that happens to me, and in everything I do, I always think I

see Jesus beside me, and I try to do all in the way I think He would have done it had He been in my place."

O my child, what a beautiful lesson! How easy will it be for you to become a Saint if, like that young man, you take Jesus as your model and guide.

II. The Good Christian must hate Sin.

By the rule of life taught by Jesus Christ we are bound in the first place to hate sin. We must hate sin above all other evils, so as to be resolved never to commit a wilful sin for the love or fear of anything whatsoever.

"Stop! what are you going to do?"

In the annals of the Society of Jesus we read that a certain young man, who was tempted to commit a mortal sin, was about to yield to it. He rose up, and was leaving his room to commit the sin, when he heard a voice saying to him in terrible accents: "Stop, O wretched man! What are you going to do?"

Looking round in the direction whence the voice came, he saw a picture of Our Lady of Dolours hanging on the wall, and as he was looking at the picture he saw Our Lady take one of the swords that was on her breast, and, holding it out to him, she said: "Take this sword and pierce my heart with it, rather than wound my beloved Son by the sin you are about to commit."

The young man, full of sorrow and shame, threw himself on the ground at her feet, and wept bitterly.

" O my Mother Mary," he exclaimed, " ask Jesus to pardon me, and I will never, never sin again."

Our compassionate Lady told him that she had obtained his forgiveness from Jesus, and his life from that moment was one of great perfection.

My child, whenever you are tempted to commit a sin think that you hear the voice of Jesus saying to you : " O wretched child, what are you going to do ? Are you going to crucify Me again as the Jews did on Mount Calvary ?" This will indeed keep you from falling.

" I WEEP BECAUSE YOU DO NOT WEEP."

One day when St. Francis of Sales was hearing Confessions, a man came to his Confessional, and accused himself of many grievous sins without showing any signs of sorrow. The Saint began to weep, and continued shedding abundant tears till the man finished his Confession. When it was done he asked the Saint why he wept so much.

" My child," he said, " I weep because you do not weep. You have by your great sins crucified the Son of God, and you seem to have no sorrow for what you have done."

These few words touched the sinner's heart, and he also began to weep. God showed him at that moment the greatness of his sins, and he became a sincere penitent.

THE BEAUTIFUL DIAMOND DESTROYED.

One day Our Lord was pleased to show St. Teresa the greatness of sin by a wonderful vision.

" I saw the soul," she said, " under the form of an immense diamond, so dazzling and beautiful that it seemed to be like the sun itself. The sight filled my soul with immense joy. Suddenly I beheld something fall upon the diamond, and it instantly became black and dark, and so hideous to look at that I was nearly falling dead upon the ground through fear.

" Jesus said to me : ' My daughter, that is but a feeble image of what mortal sin does to the soul.' "

O my child, how beautiful was your soul in Baptism ! If you have not yet committed a mortal sin, never, never do so ; but if you have already fallen, go at once and wash away the sin in the Blood of Jesus in the Sacrament of Penance, that you may become beautiful again.

A VISION OF ST. ALPHONSUS RODRIGUEZ.

One night the Saint was weeping bitterly at the remembrance of how often he had offended God. In the midst of his tears he saw before him Our Divine Lord Himself, accompanied by twelve Saints, one of whom was St. Francis of Assisi.

St. Francis said to him : " My brother, why are you weeping ?"

" O dear Saint," replied Alphonsus, " if one venial sin displeases God so much that a whole life spent in weeping for it would not be sufficient to make reparation to God for it, how great should be my grief—I who have sinned so much ?"

At these words Jesus looked on him with great affection, as if to tell him how acceptable to Him were these tears, and the vision disappeared.

From that moment Alphonsus grew daily more

fervent, and never ceased to grieve for the venial faults by which he had offended God.

And you, my child, have perhaps offended God by greater sins than ever that holy man committed, and how many tears have you shed for them? Oh, be sorry from your inmost heart, not only for grievous sins, but even for the smallest sin by which you have offended your Heavenly Father.

HOW TO KEEP AWAY FROM SIN ALWAYS.

When St. Thomas of Aquin was on his death-bed, one of his brethren in religion asked him to give him a rule which he might follow, so that he might never offend God.

St. Thomas with his dying eyes cast towards him a look of great affection, and answered: "My brother, if you keep yourself always in the presence of God, and remember that He is always seeing you, you will never lose His love by yielding to sin."

You must also hate sin, because it not only offends God, but brings eternal death to the soul.

A MAN WHO WAS MURDERED.

A man who by great industry had become very rich was passing through a lonely wood when he was met by robbers, who asked him to give up to them his money. He refused to do this, and they killed him. In one instant he not only lost his money but also his life.

When a person commits a mortal sin, he loses not only all the merits of the good works he has done in the state of grace, but also his soul, for if he dies without repentance he is lost for ever.

O my child, you see what a terrible evil sin is. You must therefore hate sin above every other evil, and be resolved to die rather than to yield to it.

III. The Good Christian must Love God.

The second thing that Jesus Christ teaches us, my child, is to love God above all things. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and soul, and mind and strength." You must therefore, my child, love God above all things with your whole heart, and since it is God alone Who can teach you to love Him as He ought to be loved, you should often say to Him: "O my God, teach me to love Thee."

This love of God will lead us often to think how good God is, often to speak to Him in our hearts, and always to seek to please Him.

It is not difficult to love God. A good child finds no difficulty in loving his parents. To love God is nothing else than to keep His commandments, and to seek to please Him in all things.

BROTHER GILES.

St. Bonaventure, one of the greatest, as well as one of the most learned, Doctors of the Church, had among his religious a lay-brother called Giles. This man had no learning, but he was very pious, and fulfilled all the duties that were laid upon him with the greatest care.

One day he said to St. Bonaventure: "My reverend Father, how happy you must be, and all you other great and learned theologians! you can love God so much more easily than we poor ignorant lay-

brothers can, and you can therefore so much more easily save your souls."

St. Bonaventure answered: "Brother Giles, you are quite wrong; with God's grace everyone can love God as much as he likes."

"What!" exclaimed the simple Giles, "can ignorant people like me, and those who cannot read nor write, love God as much as great scholars like yourself?"

"Yes, most certainly," said the Saint; "any poor old woman can love God just as much as the most learned theologian."

At these words Brother Giles seemed to be beside himself with joy. He ran into the garden, and opened the gate that led into the street, and began to cry out with all his might to the passers-by: "Come here, all you poor people; come here, all ye old women who can neither read nor write, and I will tell you a most wonderful thing. If you like, you can love God as much as the greatest theologian, even as much as our reverend Father Bonaventure himself."

The people laughed when they heard these words; and yet they are most true. A little child, a scholar going to school, can love God just as much as the most learned man or woman in the world.

The most perfect love of God consists in loving Him above all things, because He is so good in Himself.

THE LOVE OF THE YOUNG MONK FOR GOD.

In the "Lives of the Fathers of the Desert" we read that long ago there were two monks who lived to-

gether in a cell in the desert, edifying each other by their holy lives. The one was far advanced in age, and the other was quite young.

When they had spent several years together in the service of God, Satan, who was full of anger at seeing so much virtue in the younger of the two, was determined to put an end to the peace that had existed between them.

So, taking the appearance of an angel of light, he came to the old man, and said : " God has sent me to you to-day to announce to you a sad revelation. You see how good and holy your young companion is, yet one day he shall be lost, because he will not persevere." Saying this he disappeared.

These words filled the old man with great sadness. Whenever he met his young disciple he burst into tears, which he tried in vain to conceal. Day by day his grief became more intense, and all that the young man could do to console him, or to make him say what was the cause of so much grief, was useless.

" Perhaps I may have been guilty of some great fault," he one day said to himself, " and it is this that makes my dear Father so sorrowful."

So, going to the old man, he threw himself humbly at his feet, and said : " O my Father, if I have done anything to offend you, or if I have been guilty of any great fault, tell me what it is. I will do penance for it, and make every reparation in my power."

The old man still refused to say what was the cause of his trouble. But after the young monk had urged him over and over again to tell him, he at last related to him his vision.

When the young religious heard it, he answered without any sign of trouble or fear: "O my Father be no longer sad, and dry up your tears; what you have said to me gives me no trouble. I am perfectly content, provided the Holy Will of God be accomplished in me. If it were His Holy Will that I should never see Him in Heaven, may His Blessed Will be done. That would not hinder me from loving Him in this solitude just as much as before, and with the same fervour."

The old man looked in silence on his young companion as he continued: "Yes, my Father, what I say is true; I love God and I serve Him not for the sake of gaining Heaven or of escaping Hell, but because He is so good in Himself and so worthy of being loved."

These words of the young man were so pleasing to God that He sent an angel to tell the old solitary that it was Satan, the father of lies, who had come under the appearance of an angel of light to deceive him, and that his companion, instead of being amongst the number of the lost, had his name written in the Book of Life, and that he had on that day gained more merit for Heaven by his act of resignation to the Will of God, than he had gained by all the good works he had done in all his past life.

THE MUSIC OF THE LITTLE BIRDS.

One day in the spring-time the Curé of Ars was going to see a sick person. The bushes were full of little birds that were singing with all their might. The good priest stood for a moment to listen to them, and then said, with a sigh: "Poor little birds, you

were created to sing, and you sing. Man was created to love God, and he does not love Him." O my child, love God with your whole heart.

IV. The Good Christian must Love his Neighbour.

Jesus Christ also commands us to love one another —that is, all persons without exception—for His sake.

We are to love one another by wishing well to one another and praying for one another, and by never allowing ourselves any thought, word, or deed to the injury of anyone.

JESUS CHRIST'S COMMANDMENT.

The night before He died, Our Blessed Lord said to His disciples : " This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." And again : " These things I command you, that you love one another." And St. John, the beloved disciple, wrote to the faithful these words : " If any man say, ' I love God,' and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, Whom he seeth not ? And this commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God love also his brother."

ST. RAYMOND'S LOVE FOR HIS NEIGHBOUR.

St. Raymond Nonnatus loved his neighbour with his whole heart because he saw in him the person of Jesus Christ Himself. One day in the winter-time

he met in the street a poor man with scarcely any clothes to cover him, and trembling with cold. Full of compassion for him, he went up to him and embraced him, at the same time pressed him to his breast that he might become warm by being so near him. After a little time he gave him an alms, and sent him away. But seeing that he had no covering on his head, he took off his own hat and put it on the head of the poor man, so that he himself had to go home with his head uncovered.

The following night Our Divine Lord was pleased to show him a beautiful vision. While he was at prayer he saw a magnificent garden, which was full of beautiful flowers of all colours. The Queen of Angels and a multitude of other virgins were culling the flowers and making with them a crown of great beauty. One of the virgins who was plucking the flowers asked Our Lady to whom the crown was to be given, and Our Lady answered : " I am going to give it to that one who yesterday took off his hat to give it to a poor man he met in the street." At the same time Raymond saw the whole company coming towards him to place the crown on his head.

At this the holy man, instead of being full of joy was filled with great sorrow, and cried out : " O wretched man that I am, I have already lost all that I gained. Am I to receive in this world, instead of in the next, the reward for a trifling good work I performed for the glory of God ?"

When he had said these words, the vision disappeared, and he saw sitting at his feet a poor man all covered with wounds, having on his head a crown of thorns. When he had looked at the man for a

few moments, he saw that it was Jesus Christ Himself, and throwing himself at His feet he adored Him.

Then Jesus, placing the crown of thorns on his head, said to him: "My child, your Holy Mother who is also Mine, wished to crown you with flowers but since you do not desire any other glory in this world but that of My Cross, see, I have brought you a crown of thorns."

The Saint then placed the crown on his head and pressed it on so firmly that the violence of the pain awoke him from his transport. For a long time the thought of what he had seen in this vision so consoled him in all his sorrows and trials that to the end of his life, in all his actions, he sought not the praise of this world, but performed them all for God alone.

V. The Good Christian must Love his Enemies.

Jesus Christ has commanded us to love even our enemies. We must show this love for our enemies, not only by forgiving them from our hearts, but also by wishing them well, and praying for them.

It is principally by forgiving those who may have injured us that we show true love for our neighbour. Jesus Christ says in His Gospel: "If you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father Who is in Heaven."

ST. ELIZABETH PRAYS FOR HER ENEMIES.

One day when St. Elizabeth of Hungary had suffered much from those who were known to be her enemies, it happened that she received an insult so great that her soul, usually so patient, was disturbed by it. As usual in all her afflictions she sought comfort in prayer.

Bathed in tears, she begged Our Lord to bestow on her enemies a blessing for every injury they had inflicted on her.

As she was beginning to lose her strength from praying so long in this manner, she heard a voice saying to her : " Never didst thou offer to Me any prayers so agreeable as these ; they have reached My heart, and for saying them so earnestly I now pardon all the sins thou didst ever commit during the course of thy life."

The Saint, astonished at these words, cried out : " Who art Thou Who hast spoken to me in this manner ?"

To this the voice replied : " I am He at whose feet Mary Magdalen knelt in the house of Simon the publican."

If you desire, my child, to obtain from God the pardon of the sins you have committed against Him, you must forgive from your heart those who have offended you. This is the only condition on which pardon will be granted you.

CHRISTIAN REVENGE.

The little children of China not only listen to the instructions they receive, but also try to put them in practice.

One day two children were coming home from school. As they were passing through the great public square of the city, they began to quarrel. One of them struck his companion on the face. In China, to strike one on the face is to give him the greatest insult that can be given.

The one who was struck was about to return the blow, but in a moment his hands fell down by his side. "I must not strike him in return," he said to himself; "the priest told me in the instructions he gave us that it is not allowed for a Christian to take revenge."

So he turned towards his companion, and with a calm countenance said to him: "I forgive you for what you have done to me, as I hope that God will forgive me my sins against Him." And immediately he continued to play with him as if nothing had happened.

THE FATHER OF THE YOUNG NOVICE CONSOLED.

In the year 1687 the Blessed Margaret Mary was Mistress of Novices in the Convent of the Visitation at Parey-le-Monial. One of the young novices came to her one day with tears streaming from her eyes to tell her that she had just received the news of her father's death.

"My Mother," she said to Margaret Mary, "pray for my poor father, for I am sure he needs our prayers. Oh, pray that God may pardon him his sins, and soon admit him into Heaven."

The Blessed Margaret Mary answered: "Be consoled, my child, your father is now happy with God. Ask your mother to tell you what was the last good

action your dear father did before he left this world. It was that action that procured him from God a favourable judgment."

These words consoled the novice, but she was most anxious to learn what that action was which her father had done that had made God so merciful to him.

Not long after this her mother came to see her. It was on the day of her own solemn profession. "Tell me, dearest mother, what great good work my father did just before he died, for it made him most pleasing in the eyes of God."

"My dear daughter," she replied, "you must be ever grateful to our good God for the graces which He gave to your father on his death-bed. He died a most holy and edifying death. But that which was the most edifying of all was that he publicly asked forgiveness from a poor man whom he had injured."

"What had he done to injure him, my mother?"

"He was one of his workmen. Not long before that time he had said some very angry words to this man, and had caused him much sadness. But on the day when he was about to receive the Last Sacraments, among those who accompanied the priest bearing the Most Holy Sacrament was this same man. As soon as your father saw him kneeling in a corner of the room, he called him to his bedside, and taking him by the hand with great humility, publicly asked pardon for what he had done, and for the harsh words he had uttered, and asked him, for the love of Jesus Christ, to forgive him.

"After this act of humility which edified those

who were present, he received the Holy Viaticum, and soon afterwards breathed his last in sentiments of great devotion."

VI. The Good Christian has to Bear his Cross.

Jesus Christ, my child, has given us another great rule in these words: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." In the first place, we are to deny ourselves by giving up our own will, and by going against our own humours, inclinations, and passions. We are bound to deny ourselves in this manner, because our natural inclinations are prone to evil from our very childhood, and if not corrected by self-denial, they will certainly carry us to Hell.

St. Romuald's Mortification.

It was in the following manner that St. Romuald practised mortification:

Knowing that Satan makes use of the appetite for delicate food to drag us into sins, he studied on all occasions how best to mortify the sense of taste. Sometimes he would give orders that food of great delicacy should be prepared and brought to him. When this was done, and when he had looked on it for some time, as if to feel how much pleasure he would receive in eating it, he said, speaking to himself: "Now, Romuald, you have before you a very dainty morsel; without doubt it will be entirely to your liking, and you would have great pleasure in eating it. But you shall not touch one particle of it."

Saying this, he ordered it to be taken away and

the plainest food to be brought to him in its place. St. Romuald is now rewarded in Heaven for these acts of mortification for Christ's sake.

THE STORY OF A HOLY FRANCISCAN.

We all meet with many difficulties in doing our duty, and many people, when they see these difficulties, are frightened, and in the end give in to the temptation, and neglect these duties altogether.

But we must never give in—we must be full of courage ; and when we are tempted to yield, we must ask God to help us, for He has promised to give us His help when we need it, if we ask Him for it.

We read in the chronicles of St. Francis that there was once a gentleman, who held a very high position in the world. He was immensely rich, and possessed everything the world could give him to make him happy.

But he did not feel happy, for in the midst of all his riches he was afraid that in the end he might lose his soul, since Jesus Christ had said that it was so hard for a rich man to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. So he made up his mind to forsake the world altogether and go into a monastery.

One day, therefore, bidding his friends farewell, he left all his property to his heirs, and entered a religious house of the Order of St. Francis.

At first everything went on well enough ; he felt great fervour and devotion in the practice of his holy rule, and in the penances it imposed upon him.

But as time went on, and when he had already been for some time in the monastery, his fervour began to cool. He no longer found that sweetness

in saying his prayers which he had found at the beginning, and the penances and other pious works had become irksome to him.

This went on for some time without any change, till at length he could not bear it any longer. The Devil then began to tempt him with the thought of leaving the monastery altogether, and going back to the world again.

One day this temptation was so strong that he yielded to it. He quietly rose up in the morning to go back again to the world. But as he was going out he had to pass by a Crucifix, which was erected near the gate. When he saw the Crucifix, he knelt down before it as usual to say a little prayer.

When he had finished it, and was about to rise from his knees, he thought he saw near him Our Blessed Lord Himself, and along with Him Mary, His Virgin Mother.

Our Lord said to him: "My son, why are you going away, and why are you so soon to give up the good work you have so well begun?"

"O my God, forgive me!" he answered. "I had been accustomed, when I was in the world, to live so comfortably that I am not able to bear up with the hard privations which my rule requires of me."

Upon this our Saviour showed him the wound in His Sacred Side, and comforted him, saying: "My son, bring hither your hand as Thomas did, and put it into this wound, and you will draw from it so much strength and courage that, from this time forward, you will find no difficulty in fulfilling your holy rule."

The religious obeyed, and the vision disappeared.

He remained in the monastery all his lifetime, and whenever any temptation came, or whenever he felt any difficulty in performing any duty, he always had recourse to prayer, and the difficulty at once disappeared.

We often fail in our duty because we do not ask God to help us to carry our cross. In order to succeed we must always keep before our minds the answer to that question in the Catechism which says: "Whom must we depend upon in this warfare? We must not depend upon ourselves, but upon God only." *Chronicles of St. Francis.*

"HE IS A SAINT."

One day St. Francis Borgia was passing along the road in company with one of the Fathers of his Order, when they met a young man who was remarkable for his great piety. The Father, pointing to the young man, said to St. Francis: "That young man whom you see there is a Saint."

St. Francis answered: "Yes, he shall be a Saint if he only continues to practise mortification."

St. Francis himself was more careful to practise this virtue than any other, because he used to say that it was the guardian of all other virtues. He always considered that he had lost the day which he had not sanctified by several acts of self-denial.

THE OLD HERMIT'S ANSWER.

A young anchorite went to one of the ancient hermits of the desert, and asked him why so many persons were trying to become perfect, and yet so few really reached perfection.

The old hermit answered: "To become perfect, my child, it is not sufficient to desire it; one must labour to attain it. Now so very few reach perfection because they do not mortify themselves, nor curb their evil inclinations."

THE STRAIT AND NARROW WAY TO HEAVEN.

A certain Father being asked what was that strait and narrow way that leads to Heaven, which Jesus Christ speaks of in the Gospel, answered: "The narrow way is to go against our own natural inclinations, and to sacrifice our own will to the Will of God. Those who do this may say to Jesus Christ with the Apostle, 'Behold, we have left all things to follow Thee.'"

ST. PETER OF ALCANTARA'S WORDS TO HIS BODY.

St. Peter of Alcantara was accustomed to say to his body when he saw it weighed down by pain and suffering: "O my body, hear my resolution: I am determined to give you no rest in this world. Pains and afflictions shall be your lot while we are together on the earth, so that when we shall be together in Paradise for all eternity we shall be able to enjoy unalloyed happiness for ever."

WHY SATAN TEMPTED THE SAINTS SO MUCH.

The Abbot Abraham one day asked the great St. Pamon why the devils were always tempting him so much.

The Saint answered: "The Devil never tempts those who do their own wills, because those who do

their own wills are already serving him ; but it is those who have already overcome their own wills and mortify their own inclinations that the Devil harasses."

ST. TERESA AND THE ORANGES.

One day when St. Teresa was very ill and could take no food, she thought she would like to taste an orange. So someone brought her a few very sweet ones. As soon as they were brought to her, instead of touching them herself she sent them to some of her poor people who were sick.

One of the Sisters asked her why she had done so, since she stood in need of them more than anyone else.

" I feel more pleasure," she said, " in giving them to the poor than if I kept them for myself ; when I see them satisfied, I also am full of joy."

It was in this way the Saints practised mortification. They are now enjoying the fruits of it in Heaven.

WORDS OF JESUS TO ST. ROSE.

St. Rose of Lima took a firm resolution to love and serve God to the end of her life. God sent her many crosses, but she accepted them all with loving resignation to the Divine Will, and bore them with heroic patience. She had also much bodily pain to suffer, but this, too, she bore with great courage, knowing that it all came from the hand of God.

One day she was suffering more than usual ; so great was the pain that she thought it would be impossible for her to endure it much longer. As this

thought was passing through her mind, she heard a sweet voice which said these words: "My dear child, My Cross was still more painful." These words consoled her, and she bore her sufferings patiently to the end. She is now in Heaven enjoying the crown of happiness they gained for her.

VII. The Enemies of our Salvation, and how to overcome them.

The three great enemies of our soul, my child, are the Devil, the world, and the flesh.

By the Devil is meant Satan and all his wicked angels, who are ever seeking to draw us into sin that we may be damned with them.

By the world is meant the false maxims of the world and the society of those who love the vanities, riches, and pleasures of this world better than God.

By the flesh is meant our own corrupt inclinations and passions, which are the most dangerous of all our enemies.

To hinder these enemies of our soul from drawing us into sin, we must watch, pray, and fight against all their suggestions and temptations; but we must not depend upon ourselves in this warfare, but on God only.

THE ANSWER ST. ROSE GAVE.

One day when St. Rose of Lima was very young she had sore eyes; she had wilfully put something into them to make them sore, for, being anxious to grow up a child of God, she was afraid she might see

something that it would be wrong to look at, and thus be in danger of offending Him.

The child did what was very indiscreet, but she thought she was doing what was right, and it is a lesson to us who are so anxious to see everything, that we should sometimes, at least, mortify our curiosity.

When her mother saw what she had done she was very angry. "You have done a very wrong thing," she said. "You might have destroyed your eyesight, and become blind altogether."

Rose gave her this beautiful answer: "My dear mother, it would be much better for me to be blind all the rest of my life than run the risk of offending God by seeing the vanities and follies of this world."

God does not want you to hurt the eyes He has given you, but He does wish you to keep a guard over them and turn them away from anything that might cause you to offend Him.

ST. LOUIS AND HIS LITTLE SON PHILIP.

Among the many advices St. Louis gave to his little son Philip, the following has been written down at full length: "O my son, never allow anyone to say in your hearing a word that might lead those who hear it to commit sin. Never give ear to words of detraction, and never permit any word to be spoken in your presence that might in any way do injury to your neighbour."

"FLY AWAY FROM THOSE WHO FLATTER YOU."

St. Teresa had from her childhood a great aversion for those who came and spoke words of praise to her,

And when she grew up she was constantly warning others to beware of them. "Fly away from those who flatter you," she would say, "for they resemble hunters who sing sweetly and whistle pleasantly, in order that they may entice their prey into the snares they have laid for them. Those who flatter you, speak pleasing words to you that they may lead your soul into the snares of sin. Oh, beware of them!"

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD.

A little boy to whose care his father had one day confided his sheep in his absence heard a bird singing beautifully in the woods. Being anxious to see the bird, he left the sheep, and went into the wood to look for it. In the meantime a wolf, which had been watching for an opportunity, fell upon the unprotected flock, and slew some of them.

As soon as the bird had flown away, the boy returned to the field, when, to his horror, he saw what the wolf had done.

When his father returned and saw what had happened, he chid his son severely for allowing himself to be led away by the sound of a bird. The boy repented of his foolishness, but it was too late, for his tears could not restore to life the sheep which the wolf had killed.

Many Christians, my child, resemble that boy. The words they hear often make them neglect their duty to God, and the Devil comes and destroys the good they have already done. They only repent when it is too late, and frequently have to suffer for all eternity in punishment of their folly.

THE GREAT FALL.

St. Antony was told one day that there dwelt in the neighbouring desert a certain young man who was so holy that the very beasts came and knelt down at his feet, and that he was favoured by God with the gift of working miracles.

The Saint, on hearing this, did not reply, but was for a time lost in deep thought. At length he said : " My brethren, that man resembles a ship on a stormy sea, heavily laden with rich merchandise ; it is in great danger of being lost before it reaches the harbour."

Not long afterwards the Saint, being in company with some other religious, began suddenly to weep and lament as if he had just been informed of some great calamity.

The religious asked him the cause of his sudden grief.

" My brethren," he replied, " a great pillar of the Church has just fallen : God has made it known to me. Go and pay a visit to such a one," naming the young monk of whose sanctity they had spoken to him.

When they went to his cell, they found him in deep melancholy, for he had just then committed a mortal sin. He died in his sin without repentance.

Such was the terrible end of one who was once so holy, because he neglected to keep a watch over his heart, and allowed thoughts of evil to gain an entrance into it.

ST. ROSE'S TEMPTATION.

St. Rose of Lima, when a little girl, had very beautiful hair, which hung in ringlets over her shoulders. Although she already loved God very much, she was not altogether free from vanity, which so often enters the hearts even of little children.

One day, when she was playing with her brother, he accidentally threw a quantity of mud on her hair. At this the child looked at him with a vexed countenance, and was on the point of getting angry with him for what he had done to her.

When he saw this, and knew what was taking place in her heart, he said, with a seriousness beyond his years : " My dear little sister, do not be angry at what I have done ; I did not intend to do it. But keep in mind that the Devil often makes use of fine curls like these to drag good little girls down to Hell."

Rose at once put away the anger that had arisen in her heart, and from that moment, young as she was, she took the resolution never to allow her heart to be attached to any worldly thing, that she might always persevere in the service of God.

CRATES THE PHILOSOPHER.

Crates was a young man who lived before Our Lord came into this world, and did not know God. Before he went to Athens to study philosophy he sold all his possessions, and having collected together all his money he threw it into the sea.

Someone asked him why he had done so foolish an action.

He answered : " Because I do not want my mind

to be disturbed by the thought of worldly goods, or be drawn from my studies by the love of riches."

Oh, how many Christians might profit by this example of the poor pagan philosopher! How many lose their souls because they allow their hearts to be filled with the thoughts of worldly things and to be drawn from their duty to God by the love of them!

HAPPINESS AT THE HOUR OF DEATH.

A certain man was at the point of death who had led an ordinary life, and had not been given to great austerities, yet was very calm and happy. The priest asked him if he was afraid to die.

"Oh no," he replied. "I have always kept a guard on my heart, and tried to forget and forgive all the evil that was ever done to me; and I hope that the good God will forgive me as He has promised."

So he died a happy death.

ST. EPHREM AND THE GREAT SINNER.

One day St. Ephrem was on a journey. As the night was coming on he went to a house to lodge until the following morning. The people who dwelt in the house were not good, but the Saint did not know this when he went into it.

When he had finished his supper, one of the people in the house tempted him to do what was very wrong. The Saint then saw what kind of people he had fallen amongst, but, remembering that God helps those who are in temptation when it is not by their own fault that they are in it, he raised up his

mind to Heaven, and asked his Heavenly Father for His help and protection.

The person still continued to ask him to do what was evil.

St. Ephrem answered : " Since such is your desire, surely you will allow me to choose the place where the evil may be done."

" Yes, certainly," replied the other. " Where do you want to go ?"

" We will go into the city to the market-place, and there do the evil."

" You must be mad to think of such a thing," the person answered ; " everyone would see us there."

The Saint then said : " Is it not you, rather, who are mad ? You may indeed not be seen by men when you commit sin, because you may go to some place where no human eye can see you. But you cannot hide yourself from God's all-seeing eye, which can pierce into our very hearts, which can penetrate even the depths of the earth and see clearly in the darkest night. God sees all that we do, and will punish us for everything that we do wrong."

Then the Saint, hoping to bring an erring soul back to the path of duty, continued : " As for yourself, I ask you to renounce your life of sin, and return to serve God with your whole heart."

The advice of the Saint was not lost. This poor sinner became a sincere penitent.

RIBAD, ii. 164.

THE ABBOT JOHN'S COMPARISON.

The Abbot John of Egypt used to say that a Christian during his time of trial on earth ought to resemble a man sitting under a tree. "When such a one sees a wild beast coming to devour him, he immediately climbs up the tree for safety, and is soon beyond its reach, so the Christian, when he sees a temptation coming to make him offend God, ought to ascend to God by the tree of prayer, and then no temptation can hurt him."

THE MONK WHO DID NOT PRAY.

A young man named Paces went into the desert of Scete to consecrate his life to God in fasting and works of penance.

When he had persevered in this kind of life for many years, in the enjoyment of sweet consolations such as God often grants to those who thus lovingly offer themselves entirely to Him, he began to be tormented with temptations. Strange thoughts would come before his mind—impure thoughts, and even doubts about the truths revealed by God. These continued for a long time, and made his life so insupportable that he fell into despair.

Instead of asking God to help him by His grace, he thought that he would put an end to his life. So one day he went out into the wilderness that he might meet some wild beast which would devour him. He had not long to wait, for he soon came to a den of lions. "Now," said he to himself, "my misery will soon be at an end."

But when the lions saw him, instead of rushing forward to devour him, they came up to him and tamely lay down at his feet. He tried to provoke them, but they turned away from him and went back to their den.

This made him reflect on what he had done, and the eternal flames of Hell into which he would have been cast for ever if he had been killed. He returned to his cell in the hope that these dismal thoughts would leave him.

Still he neglected to pray, and in a short time they returned with even greater force. For a second time he yielded to the temptation to put an end to his existence. Going out into the desert, he found a viper whose sting he knew to be deadly. He took it into his hand, and tried to make it sting him, but in vain. So he threw it down, and, looking up to Heaven, cried out : " O God, why is it that Thou so often dost strike with death many who desire to live, and now when I desire to die Thou dost not permit it ?"

In answer to these words he heard a voice that said to him : " O foolish child, why had you the presumption to imagine that you could by your own strength overcome temptations ? See, now, how weak you are, and learn to have recourse to God by prayer when you are tempted."

Paces returned to his cell, this time a humble man ; he followed the counsel he had so miraculously received, and found peace. Temptations vanished before his prayer, and for ever afterwards he persevered.

O my child, from this example learn also to know

how weak you are, and that when you are tempted you must have recourse to prayer, otherwise you will never persevere to the end and be saved.

THE SOLDIER MARINUS.

Long ago, at Cæsarea in Palestine, there was a young soldier, called Marinus, who was rich and renowned for his bravery. He was a Christian. According to the established custom of the country it was this soldier who should have obtained the office of centurion then vacant ; but someone who had an ill-will against him, and who himself would have obtained the position if Marinus had not been there, went to the Governor and told him that Marinus was a Christian, and as such could not lawfully hold that office.

The soldier was summoned before the Governor, who said to him : " Marinus, to what religion do you belong ?"

" I am a Christian, my lord."

The Governor, having spoken to him of the edicts that had been issued against that sect, and the punishments that befell those who professed it, gave him three hours to consider whether he would renounce his religion, and thus obtain the rank and honour he had a right to receive, or die according to the imperial decree.

Theoctinus, the Bishop of that city, having learned what had taken place, sent for Marinus who had just left the Governor's house. " Come with me," he said ; and he led him into the church.

When they reached the sanctuary, the Bishop placed one hand on the sword that Marinus carried

and the other on the book of the Gospels that lay on the altar. "My son," he said, "you have now to choose between these two; which of them are you going to take?"

The soldier without hesitating pointed to the book of the Gospels, meaning by this that he chose to renounce the military honours then within his reach, and to submit to death rather than disobey God.

The Bishop then said: "Go in peace, my child, and may the Almighty God of Heaven give you an eternal reward, because you have renounced all worldly honour for His sake."

As Marinus was leaving the church, an officer came to tell him that the three hours of respite were finished, and to bring him again before the Governor.

When the Governor asked him what he was now going to do, Marinus answered, even more courageously than before, that he was a Christian, and that he would never disobey God for the love or fear of anything whatsoever.

He was condemned to death, and the sentence was at once carried out. His pure soul went straight to Heaven to receive from the hands of his Father there the reward He has promised to all who suffer persecution for His sake.

THE DYING SOLDIER.

In a hospital for sick soldiers there was a young man lying in danger of death; he was a Catholic. Several times during his illness the priest asked him to prepare to die well, as there was but little hope of his recovery.

" Not yet," he always answered, " not yet ; I will think of it to-morrow."

The next day he gave the same answer, but added : " I should like very much to make my Confession, but it is impossible for me to do so."

" What is there that can make it impossible for you to make your Confession, my child ?" said the priest in the gentlest of tones.

The only answer the dying man gave was : " Don't speak to me of this any more, I beseech you, for I tell you that it is quite impossible."

The priest tried to show him the happiness and peace that fill the soul of a sinner who has obtained God's pardon, and asked him, for God's sake and for the sake of his own immortal soul, to make his peace with God before it was too late.

The soldier shook his head. " It is of no use, Father, for you to ask me to do this. Do you see those men there ?" he said, pointing to the other soldiers who were in the room ; " what would they think or say if they saw me making my Confession ? They would call me foolish, and would laugh at me ! Oh no, I could not think of doing it."

The priest in an instant saw that human respect was the cause of the poor man's obstinacy, so he went to the group of soldiers, and said to them : " Comrades, you are making that man die an unhappy death."

" How, sir, are we doing that ?"

" He says," answered the priest, " that you would call him a coward and a fool if he made his Confession, and he therefore refuses to make it."

The men rose up in a body, and went over to the

bed of their dying comrade. "Do you think that we are pagans?" they exclaimed. "Instead of even thinking of calling you a coward if you made your Confession, we were quite alarmed about you, and were asking ourselves whether you intended to die like a dog or like a Christian."

These words cured the young man. He called the priest to his side, and made his Confession, after which he received the Last Sacraments with great fervour, his comrades kneeling around his bed. An hour afterwards he died, and his soul went to the tribunal of Jesus Christ to be judged.

A GREAT PRINCE'S LAST WORDS.

The Prince de Condé, who had made a great name for himself in the world by his celebrated victories and his bravery on the battle-field, and who had in so high a degree gained the applause of the world, was told by his physicians that they had done all for him that it was in the power of their art to do, and that the hour of his death was at hand.

The great man was silent for a few minutes; then, turning to those who were around his bed, he exclaimed: "Ah, my friends, how very different things appear to me now than when I was in good health! How vain is all earthly glory, and how empty is all human praise!"

LIX

THE CHRISTIAN'S DAILY EXERCISE

I. On Beginning the Day Well.

My child, you should begin the day by making the sign of the Cross as soon as you awake in the morning, and by saying some short prayer, such as: "O my God, I offer my heart and my soul to Thee."

"In the morning when I waken,
With the Cross I sign myself:
And say 'Jesus, Mary, Joseph,
I give you my heart and soul.'"

You should then say that beautiful prayer called the "Good Intention": "My dear Jesus, may I do all for the love of Thee this day!" By these words said with devotion in the morning you consecrate to God all your thoughts, words, and actions, and at the Day of Judgment He will give you an eternal reward for each one of them.

THE ANGEL AND THE SOLITARY.

"What must I do to save my soul? If I only knew what God wants me to do, oh, how willingly would I do it! O my God, teach me how to become perfect!"

These were the words that a certain holy solitary in the desert was continually saying to himself night and day. God, Who saw the great desire he had of serving Him, was pleased to answer his prayer by sending an angel from Heaven to show him how to serve Him in such a way as to insure his salvation.

The angel said to him : " Follow me."

The holy man rose up at once, and followed the angel.

He brought him, in the first place, to a simple hut, which was the abode of a poor man and his family. The angel stood before the door of the hut, and pointed to a little girl who was sweeping the earthen floor. She was clad in very poor clothes, but there was a pleasant smile upon her countenance, and she was singing joyfully : " My dear Jesus, may I do all for the love of Thee !"

Then the angel led him into a great and beautiful church which was full of people, who were listening to a great preacher, announcing with much eloquence the Word of God. So powerful were his words that the tears were flowing from the eyes of many of those who were listening to him.

When the sermon was ended, the preacher came down from the pulpit, and passed through the crowd that was in the church. He seemed to be pleased at the impression he had made upon the people, and looked as if he thought that he had done much good by his sermon.

The angel said to the solitary : " Which of these two, the girl in the hut or the great preacher in the church, think you, has done most for God ?"

The solitary immediately answered : " There can

be no doubt about it ; it was most certainly that great preacher."

" You are wrong, my child," said the angel ; " it was the little girl in the hut." This eloquent preacher was more anxious to obtain the esteem and the applause of men than to give glory to God, while the girl in the hut was doing all for the sake of Jesus Christ.

THE HUNTSMAN TAKING AIM.

A huntsman was one day passing through a forest along with an inexperienced companion, when a wild animal suddenly sprang up near them. The huntsman immediately raised his gun to his shoulder, but did not immediately fire. For a few seconds he fixed his eye steadily on the animal so as to take sure aim, and when he had done this he fired, and the animal fell dead at his feet on the ground.

His companion said to him : " Why did you not fire as soon as you put the gun to your shoulder ?"

He answered : " I was taking aim so that I might not miss the animal. If I had not done so I might have missed it altogether, and the beast would have most certainly rushed upon us and killed us."

So you also, my child, should in the morning take aim like the huntsman, so that what you have to perform during the day may be directed to that end which God desires you to aim at—that is, His honour and glory.

ST. ALDERIC'S DAILY RULE OF LIFE.

In the Life of St. Alderic we read that in the morning, as soon as he awoke, he said these words :

" I rise from this bed in the Name of Jesus Christ my Saviour, and to show Him that I love Him. O Jesus, by the merits of Thy Passion and death, be pleased to bless my body and my soul, to guard me from evil, and guide me to do good."

While putting on his clothes he would say : " O my God, I love Thee with my whole heart ; keep me this day without sin, for I fear nothing so much as to offend Thee."

Then he would kneel down at his bedside, over which was a pious picture or image of Jesus crucified, and would say slowly and devoutly his morning prayers.

During the day, while at his lessons or his work, he used often to say : " My Jesus, I do all for Thee."

At night before retiring to rest he knelt to pray as he had done in the morning, and when retiring to rest he commended his soul to God's care. It was in doing this day by day that he became the great Saint he now is in Heaven. Surely the way to Heaven is easy if so little is required to be done to reach it. Every child can easily do what St. Alderic did.

THE TWO SISTERS.

Matilda and Stephanie were two sisters who had lost their mother when very young. Matilda, being the elder, received from her dying mother special care of her younger sister. " Take care of little Stephanie," she said ; " be a mother to her ; teach her to serve God and to be an angel in virtue and innocence."

Matilda fulfilled this duty with the greatest zeal.

Under her care the child learned how to please God, and everyone loved her because she was so innocent.

After her First Communion she used sometimes to spend a whole hour before her Crucifix thinking on the sufferings of her Divine Saviour. Yet so great was her simplicity that she would sometimes say to Matilda : " My dear sister, do you think that I can ever be really good without knowing how to pray ?"

These words, " O my God, I do all for Thee," were often upon her lips every day. And when she was tempted to fall into any little fault they gave her courage to overcome the temptation.

She died when she was fifteen years old. Everyone who knew her said that she must have gone straight to Heaven, because she had served God so faithfully during her short life.

II. On Hearing Holy Mass Daily.

Although there is no obligation of hearing Mass imposed on us except on Sundays and certain holidays, yet, my child, you should endeavour to assist at Mass every day if you have time and opportunity, for to hear Mass is by far the best and most profitable of all devotions.

Endeavour, therefore, my child, to be present at Holy Mass every day if possible, since in it God bestows on us so many blessings. The Psalmist said these beautiful words which the Church has applied to the Most Holy Eucharist : " He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord ; He hath given food to them that fear Him " (Ps. cx. 4).

HOW THE SAINTS LOVED TO HEAR HOLY MASS DAILY.

It would be impossible to describe to you, my child, the intense desire of the Saints, in all ages of the Church, to assist at Holy Mass. It was this that made them Saints. But read attentively the following examples; they may inspire you with the desire to imitate them, that you may become Saints like them:

St. Hyacintha, of Mariscotti, was so full of joy every time she heard Mass that torrents of tears used to fall down her cheeks. "My Jesus is now crucified again," she used to say. "O my Jesus, when shall You have offered Yourself sufficiently often to wash out the sins of men?"

She went to Holy Communion every day, and if her Superiors had not prevented her she would have spent all the days of her life before the holy tabernacle. "O my dearest Lord," she would often say, "I am a poor worm of the earth, and Thou art the infinite God, and yet Thou didst die for me on the Cross. O my Lord, teach me how to love Thee as I ought."

Blessed Thomas More never omitted hearing Mass, notwithstanding his numerous occupations. One day while he was assisting at Mass the King's messenger came and told him that His Majesty required his immediate presence in order to transact with him business of the greatest importance.

The Chancellor said to him: "Yet a little patience; I have to present my homages of respect to a Sovereign of greater power and authority than

his, and I think it necessary to remain at the audience of Heaven until it shall be over."

He considered it an honour to serve Mass. "I deem it," he used to say, "a high honour to have it in my power to render this slight service to the greatest of Sovereigns."

St. Louis of France used to hear two Masses every day, sometimes even three or four. Some of his courtiers murmured at this, but the King gave them a sharp reprimand, saying: "If I were to ask you to play, or to go hunting with me three or four times a day, you would not find the time too long, and now you feel weary of staying in the Church during one or two Masses for the honour of Our Lord and Saviour."

Henry III. of England used to assist every day at three High Masses, besides several Low Masses. One day St. Louis, while conversing with him on this devotion, observed to him that it was not always necessary to assist at so many Masses, but that he should go and listen to as many sermons as possible.

King Henry replied: "I prefer seeing my friend often to hearing anyone speak of him, however excellent may be his discourse."

MÜLLER: *The Mass, passim.*

THE NOBLEMAN AND THE PEASANT.

Æneas Sylvius, who was afterwards Pope Pius II., tells us that in a city of Germany, called Suezia, there lived a gentleman of noble birth, who, after having lost the greatest part of his property, retired to a remote country house to live sparingly on his reduced income.

But here he became a prey to the most profound melancholy, so much so that he was on the verge of despair for the past and of dread for the future.

The demon, seeing him in this wretched state, repeatedly tempted him to commit suicide, and thus put an end to his miseries ; " for," said the tempter, " there is nothing for a rotten tree but the woodman's axe."

In this combat against temptation and remorse, the nobleman had recourse to a holy Confessor, who gave him this good advice : " Do not allow one day to pass without hearing Mass, and if you do this you need not dread these temptations of the Devil."

The gentleman was so pleased with this advice that he resolved never to be absent from Mass on any account whatever. And in order to make sure of this he engaged a chaplain to offer up every day the Most Holy Sacrifice for him, at which he was always present with the most edifying devotion.

One day, however, it happened that this chaplain was obliged to assist at the first Mass of a priest recently ordained. The nobleman, afraid lest he should lose Mass on that day, set out for the church to which his chaplain had gone. On the way he met a peasant, who told him that he might as well turn back, as the Mass was already ended, and that there was to be no other Mass that day in the church.

Deeply afflicted at this news, the gentleman began to weep bitterly, and to repeat over and over again : " Alas ! what will become of me, a miserable man ? What shall I do to-day ? Perhaps this may be the last day of my life."

The countryman was astonished to see him thus

troubled for the loss of one Mass, and said : " If you wish, I will, in exchange for your cloak, sell you my part of the Mass I have heard."

The gentleman readily consented to the strange proposal, and gave his cloak to the peasant, hoping to gain something because of his good intention of hearing Mass on that day. He afterwards walked to the church, where he knelt down, and remained some time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

Having finished his devotions, he returned home ; but on his way, when he reached the spot where the peasant had made that abhorrent bargain, to his horror he saw before him the unfortunate wretch hanging from the branch of a tree, and already dead. The temptation to commit suicide which had previously tormented him, and which the daily hearing of Holy Mass had dispelled, had left him, and entered into the heart of the unhappy peasant who voluntarily had deprived himself of the help of grace he had received in the Most Holy Sacrifice, and had thus become an easy prey to the demon of despair.

The nobleman, considering all this seriously on his way home, was firmly convinced that his Confessor had shown him the most powerful means of overcoming the attacks of the devil, and he then renewed his resolution of never allowing a day to pass without hearing Holy Mass. *The Hidden Treasure*, p. 112.

III. On Receiving Holy Communion Daily.

When we say the Lord's Prayer, we ask Our Lord to " Give us this day our daily bread." By these words Our Lord did not mean so much that bread

which is necessary for the daily support of our bodies, although it is His desire that we should confidently ask Him also for it, but it is for the Bread that nourishes our souls that we should chiefly ask Him, for He also very clearly said: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you; for the bread of God is that which cometh down from Heaven" (John vi. 27, 33).

It is therefore Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist Who is the Daily Bread we chiefly pray for, and we ought as often as it is in our power to receive daily this Heavenly Bread sacramentally, or at least spiritually, and in desire.

"THE MASTER IS COME, AND CALLETH FOR THEE."

There was in the town of Bethania a family whom Jesus loved; it consisted of three persons—Lazarus, Martha, and Mary.

Lazarus had just died; Jesus at the time was absent, but, knowing all things, He knew that he was dead. He said to His disciples: "Lazarus our friend sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of his sleep."

The disciples therefore said: "Lord, if he sleep he shall do well." But Jesus spoke of his death, and they thought that He spoke of the repose of sleep. Then, therefore, Jesus said to them plainly: "Lazarus is dead."

Martha and Mary were at home plunged in the most profound grief when Jesus arrived in Bethania. Martha, hearing of his arrival, went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying: "The Master is come,

and calleth for thee." She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly, and cometh to Him. Jesus raised Lazarus to life, and restored him to his sisters (St. John xi.).

My child, that same Jesus lives in our Church also, and He loves us as He loved that devout family—ah, who can ever tell how much He loves each one of us?—and He is daily calling on us to come to receive Him in Holy Communion. It is the Holy Father, His representative on earth, that says to each one of us in His Name: "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Hasten, then; rise quickly as Mary did, and go to Him; He will come into your house, the house of your soul, with the same love as He entered Martha's dwelling, and the angels of Heaven will repeat in accents of ineffable joy the words the Jews uttered on that occasion: "Behold, how He loved him!"

O my child, endeavour to go to Holy Communion every day, that you may show Jesus how ardently you desire to love Him, and that you may fill with renewed joy the angels and Saints in Paradise.

POPE PIUS X. ENCOURAGES DAILY COMMUNION.

In a decree published on June 3, 1905, the Holy Father manifests his "great desire that daily Communion, so salutary and so agreeable to God, may be by the grace of God propagated everywhere amongst the Christian people."

The Sacred Congregation of the Council, in the month of December, decreed: "Frequent and daily Communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ Our Lord and by the Catholic Church, should

be open to all the faithful of whatever rank and condition in life, so that no one who is in the state of grace, and who approaches the holy table with a right and devout intention, can lawfully be hindered therefrom. A right intention consists in this, that he who approaches the holy table should do so not out of routine, or vainglory, or human respect, but for the purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united to Him by charity, and of seeking this Divine remedy for his weaknesses and defects.

" These dispositions are eminently found in First Communicants, whose minds have not been affected by sin, and who are free from hypocrisy.

" Wherefore frequent and daily Communion is to be strongly commended to young children, since it is greatly to be desired that before they are overcome by passions they should be clothed in Christ, and thus shielded in their innocence and piety."

Excerpts from "Roman Acts and Decrees."

IV. On Spiritual Communion.

A Spiritual Communion is an ardent desire to receive Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament and to embrace Him lovingly, as if you had actually received Him, when it is not in your power to receive Him sacramentally.

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

" I believe in Thee, O my Jesus, present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar ; I love Thee with my whole heart, and I desire to receive Thee into my soul. Since I cannot now receive Thee sacrament-

ally, come, at least, spiritually, into my heart. I embrace Thee, and I unite myself to Thee as if Thou wert already there. Oh, permit me not ever to be separated from Thee. O Lord Jesus Christ, let the sweet and consuming force of Thy love absorb my whole soul, that I may die for the love of Thee, Who wast pleased to die for the love of me."

You can often think of Jesus and speak to Him ; you can over and over again tell Him that you are sorry for having offended Him, and you can have a great desire of receiving Him in the Sacrament of His love. Every time you do this you make a Spiritual Communion.

THE LITTLE GIRL'S CELL.

More than two hundred years ago there lived in France a little girl called Magdalen Vigneron. She had made her First Communion when she was very young, and from that time she found no greater joy than in going often to receive Jesus in the Sacrament of His love.

But as she was not permitted to go every day to Communion she tried to make up for it by making every day many Spiritual Communions. And in order that she might do so without being disturbed, she made for herself a little cell in a lonely place of her father's house. If a servant or anyone else came to look for her she would quickly come out, carrying some of her toys with her, so that she might in this way hide her devotions, and as soon as the person went away she went back to her prayers. Oh, what delight her soul found in that poor little place, far from worldly noise and from the sports of

her companions! How easy it was to pray there alone with God! There she made her Spiritual Communions, and there did she obtain from Jesus those great graces which made her so good.

The piety of Magdalen grew with her years. The great desire she had of being united to Jesus in Heaven for ever seemed to have shortened her days. She died in sentiments of the most tender piety on September 29, 1667, at the age of thirty-nine years.

THE TWO VESSELS.

Our Lord one day appeared to Sister Paula, a holy nun who dwelt in Naples, with two vessels in His hands, the one of gold and the other of silver. As she was wondering what this could signify, Jesus said to her: "My daughter, I keep in the golden vessel all your Sacramental Communions, and in the silver one your Spiritual Communions."

ST. JANE OF THE CROSS.

Our Lord once told St. Jane of the Cross that as often as she made a Spiritual Communion she received a grace similar to that which she received when she made a Sacramental Communion.

BLESSED ANGELA OF THE CROSS.

Blessed Angela of the Cross, a Dominican nun, was accustomed to make one hundred Spiritual Communions every day and as many every night, and she used to say: "If my Confessor had not taught me this manner of communicating I could scarcely live."

ADVICE OF THE BLESSED CURE OF ARS.

"If we are deprived of Sacramental Communion, let us replace it as far as we can by Spiritual Communions. We can do this at every moment, for we ought at every moment to have a burning desire to receive the good God."

V. On Making Daily Meditation.

It is useful to make daily meditation, for such was the practice of all the Saints. This meditation should be, in the first place, thinking on the four last things, for the Holy Ghost tells us in the Scriptures that if we think on our last end we will never sin. You should also often think on the life and Passion of Our Blessed Lord, because it was by His sufferings and death that the Kingdom of Heaven was opened to us.

ST. BRIDGET'S VISION OF JESUS CRUCIFIED.

When St. Bridget was a little girl ten years old she heard a sermon on the sufferings which Our Blessed Lord endured for us in His Passion. The words which the preacher said touched her so much that during all that day she could think of nothing else.

The following night she had a vision, in which she saw Our Lord hanging on the Cross.

Jesus said to her: "Bridget, my child, behold Me nailed to the Cross."

"O my dear Jesus," she said, "who nailed You to that Cross?"

Jesus answered her : " Those who despise Me, and refuse to love Me, and offend Me by their sins."

When Bridget awoke she was moved so much by what she had seen that from that day till the end of her life she could not hear about the sufferings of Jesus, or even think upon them, without shedding tears.

One night her aunt went into the room where she and the other children slept. She found them all in bed asleep except Bridget, who was kneeling at her bedside before her Crucifix, weeping.

Her aunt was very angry when she saw the child there, because she thought that she might be doing this for the sake of being seen, or for some other such reason. So she got a birch-rod, and struck her with it. In an instant the rod was broken into pieces.

" What are you doing there ?" said her aunt to her in an angry tone.

" O dear aunt," she cried out, " I have risen out of bed to praise Him Who is always helping me to be good."

" And who is that ?" she asked.

Bridget answered : " It is my Lord and Saviour Jesus, Who was crucified for me."

Her aunt was very sorry for what she had done to the dear child, and after that time she always had the greatest affection and veneration for her.

SURIUS : *Vit. St. Birgittæ.*

My child, if you cannot always weep when you think of the sufferings of Jesus, you can at least be sorry for your sins which were the cause of these sufferings ; this will give His Sacred Heart some consolation.

ST. TERESA AND JESUS SUFFERING.

In the Life of St. Teresa we read that in her meditations she preferred to think of Our Lord in those places where He was, when in this world, mostly to be found alone. So she often went in spirit to the Garden of Gethsemani. She would stand or kneel at the side of her Divine Master in His grief, and gaze upon His countenance overwhelmed with sadness, and His eyes dim with weeping. Then she would listen with the deepest emotion as she imagined she heard Him beseech His Heavenly Father to take from Him the bitter chalice of His sufferings.

And as she imagined she saw the drops of blood trickling down upon the ground, she would weep and pray as He did : " My Father, not my will, but Thine, be done." And as Jesus was strengthened by this prayer, so also did she feel stronger in the sufferings which for forty years never left her.

Life of St. Teresa.

THE VALUE OF A TEAR.

A little child of the name of Catharine used to go to a school taught by the nuns.

One day the Sister who was in charge of the school was giving the children an instruction on the sufferings of Our Blessed Redeemer, to which the little girl listened with the greatest attention.

" My children," she said, " one tear shed through compassion for the sufferings of Jesus is of far greater value before God than almost anything else we can do."

Catharine heard these words, and next day when

she went to Holy Mass she kept her eyes fixed on the Cross, and thought of the cruel sufferings which Jesus endured for the love of us.

Very soon the tears began to run down her cheeks. "O my dear Jesus," she said, "I wish I could suffer something instead of you."

The Sister heard these words, and saw her weeping. "My child," she said, "what is the matter with you?"

"I am weeping because I am sorry to see Jesus suffering so much."

The Sister remembered the instruction she had given to the children the day before, and she, too, wept with joy to see a tear shed through love for Jesus crucified.

VI. On Reading Good Books.

One of the chief means Satan makes use of for the destruction of souls, especially at the present time, is the reading of bad books, because by them people learn how to live according to the maxims of the world, which are so much condemned by Jesus Christ.

We ought frequently, then, to read good books, such as the Holy Gospel, the "Lives of the Saints," and other spiritual works, which nourish our faith and piety, and arm us against these false maxims of the world.

ESDRAS READS THE LAW OF GOD TO THE PEOPLE.

In the Old Testament it is related that when the children of Israel returned from the captivity of

Babylon to Jerusalem, Esdras the Scribe assembled the people together, that they might hear the law of God read to them. And when all the people were assembled, Esdras stood upon a high place that he might be seen and heard by the multitude. As soon as he had opened the book, and had begun to read, all the people became silent, and stood up through reverence for the Word of God. And although the reading of the law continued till midday from the early morning, the people listened with attention, and wept with joy, as they heard the Word of God expounded to them.

In like manner, my child, whenever you read a pious book, or hear it read to you, imitate the example of these people, and give God thanks for granting you the grace of reading it or of listening to it.

KING MALCOLM OF SCOTLAND AND HIS SPOUSE ST. MARGARET.

King Malcolm of Scotland had the greatest affection for his young wife St. Margaret, and as he knew that nothing would give her so much joy as to see him leading a holy life, he tried to imitate her in everything, not only by avoiding sin as she did, but in practising those heroic acts of virtue he saw her perform.

"From her," says Theodoric, who was an eye-witness of what he relates, "Malcolm learned to pass the night in watching and prayer, and to perform works of mercy.

"In all things the King and Queen were of one mind: what she loved he loved, and from what she hated he also turned away. He would sit beside her

and listen to her with the greatest attention as she spoke to him of God, or read to him from the Sacred Scriptures or other books of devotion. He often took these books into his hands, although he could not read them, and would turn over the leaves, and if he saw her use one book oftener than the others, he also would look at it more frequently and kiss it more reverently. Sometimes he would secretly take away one or other of her favourite books, and would get it adorned with gold and precious stones, and would then present it to her as a mark of his affection."

One of these books was a copy of the Holy Scriptures. It was magnificently adorned with gold and jewels, and the pages were illuminated with pictures of the most delicate workmanship. It was the book she prized more than all the others.

One day, when going to the church to say her prayers, she gave it to one of her pages that he might carry it for her. On the way to the church they had to cross a river. While in the boat the book fell from its cover into the water without anyone seeing what had happened. When they reached the opposite bank the loss was observed. Search was immediately made for it everywhere. After some time it was seen lying open at the bottom of the stream, the leaves being tossed backwards and forwards by the current.

It was soon taken out. Everyone thought it would have been utterly destroyed by the water, and that the exquisite paintings would have been washed away. Great was the astonishment of the people when they saw it was as beautiful as ever. Not only

were the leaves without stain, but even the delicate pictures that adorned them were not injured.

Margaret gave thanks to God for this kindness to her, and made use of the miracle to excite in her heart a still greater confidence in His fatherly protection. And the people who heard of it considered it a mark of God's special love for their holy Queen, and their veneration for her increased.

HOW A GOOD BOOK CONVERTED A ROBBER.

A pious young lady occupied a house situated about three miles from the city. One night when she went to rest, according to her usual custom before falling asleep, and after she had finished her evening ejaculations, she read a pious meditation from her book of devotions.

While she was thus occupied, it happened that a carriage from the city stopped at the door of her house, and a message was brought to her that one of her friends there had suddenly become very ill, and desired to see her. So she rose immediately and laid down the book on the table open at the place where she had been reading, and hastened to the house of her friend, accompanied by her maid and her servant.

It happened also at the same time that a robber was passing near the house, and seeing that the inmates had gone away in the carriage, he thought it would be an excellent opportunity of stealing some of the young woman's possessions. Accordingly he ascended, by means of a ladder, to the window of the room in which she slept, where he easily obtained an entrance. Having procured a

light, he looked around to see what he could appropriate. The first thing that attracted his attention was the open book upon the table at the side of the bed. He took it up, and the first words he read were these : " O my God, be pleased, I beseech Thee, to keep me this day without sin ; then, indeed, I shall be able to sleep at night peacefully. May I spend all the days of my life free from sin ! How sweet will it be to die after a life faithfully spent in Thy service ! Death, which is so terrible to the most of men, would then become for me a peaceful slumber."

These words touched the heart of the robber so forcibly that he did not lay his hands on any of the things he could so easily have stolen. He left the room in greater haste than he had entered it, and from that moment changed his life, made a good Confession, and became a fervent Christian.

In after-years, when he lay on his death-bed, he related the history of his repentance to his children, and exhorted them with his dying lips ever to have a high esteem in their hearts for the Word of God, to read good books, and pray always with great devotion.

Chr. v. Schmid.

VII. On the Sanctification of our Actions.

My child, God does not require of you to do extraordinary actions, but He requires that you do your ordinary actions extraordinarily well. So you should sanctify your ordinary actions and employments of the day by often raising up your heart to God whilst you are about them, and saying some short prayer to Him.

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES'S LESSON.

"My child," he said, "you perhaps cannot often do very great works for God, but you can very often every day do little ones. He who lays every day one brick on a building will soon raise up a large house. Do some good, therefore, every day of your life, and be always on the watch for opportunities of doing good. Remember that Jesus, Who saw the mite which the widow placed in the box at the door of the Temple, and Who rewarded her for it more than all the others, also sees every good work you do, no matter how little it is, and will reward you for it if you do it for the love of Him."

THE ADVICE OF A SAINT'S MOTHER.

St. Alphonsus had the happiness of having a Saint for his mother. She watched over him unceasingly that he might grow up in piety and in the practice of every Christian virtue. Alphonsus, on his part, listened to her words as if they had been the words of God Himself, and endeavoured to put them into practice.

One day she said to him: "My dear child, you ought to become better and more pious every day, for such is the Will of God."

"This is also my own most earnest desire, my mother," he replied. "But what must I do to accomplish this?"

The following is the advice she gave him; it is one, my child, you should also try to follow.

"Speak but little," she said; "never be idle; think often of God even while working for the world,

and in the silence of your heart often weep for the sins the world is constantly committing against God ; say your prayers regularly, and have a special devotion for the Most Holy Mother of God ; often think of the sufferings of the lost souls, that you may escape them, and of the joys of Paradise, that you may one day secure them ; do not allow your heart to have any attachment to the things of earth, and do all the good you can while God permits you to remain in this world ; be temperate in your eating and drinking ; and do not be kept from doing good through the words of those who criticize you. In everything you undertake have in view the glory of God ; have also a great devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and be a faithful child of the Catholic Church as long as you live."

Les S. Legendes.

A CHILD WHO WAS ALWAYS PRAYING.

The Holy Curé of Ars, when a little boy, had to labour in the fields because his father was poor. But while he was at work he did all for Jesus.

" When I was alone in the fields," he used often to say, " with my spade or my pickaxe in my hand, I used to pray and speak to Jesus aloud ; but when I had companions with me I used to pray to Him in my heart.

" We used to rest after dinner before we set to work again. I stretched myself on the ground like the others, and pretended to be asleep, but I was praying to Jesus with all my heart. Oh, those were happy days !"

THE OLD HERMIT AND HIS YOUNG DISCIPLE.

In days now long past there were two hermits in the desert who were preparing themselves for eternity by prayers, penances, and good works ; the one was advanced in years, and the other was young.

One day they were occupied in digging in the forest, that they might find good soil for the little garden near their cells, so that it might produce more abundantly the vegetables they needed for their daily support. As they did not possess any cart or beast of burden, they were obliged to carry the earth in sacks upon their shoulders.

The younger religious felt himself so much overpowered by the rays of the sun, and tormented by the flies which annoyed him, that at every spadeful of earth he lifted into the sack he complained bitterly.

" I beseech you, my brother," said the elder one, " try and labour more patiently."

" I have over and over again," he replied, " prayed to God to bestow on me the gift of patience, but He has not as yet given it to me."

The old man made no answer, but continued to put earth into the sack in silence. When it was full, he said to his companion : " Help me, brother, to raise the sack upon my shoulders."

The other did so, but as the old hermit with all his strength tried to keep it on the ground, all the young man's efforts were of no avail.

" What do you mean by doing that ?" the young man said. " How do you imagine that I shall ever be able to raise that weighty sack if you do all in your power to keep it on the ground ?"

"It is thus that people resist the grace of the Holy Ghost," said the old man. "They ask Him to come to their assistance, and He is always ready to do so. But if they, instead of co-operating with His grace, do all in their power to resist it, how can that grace benefit them?

"So, my son," he continued, "daily pray to God to bestow on you the grace you need in order to spend that day well in His service, and when He offers it to you, be sure never to resist it."

Blumen der Wüste.

VIII. How to Sanctify our Eating, Drinking, and Amusements.

We can sanctify our eating, drinking, and amusements by using all these things with moderation, and with a desire to please God. St. Paul says with regard to them: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31).

THE GAME OF BALL.

A great Saint was once amusing himself with several others in a field in the country; they were playing at a game of ball.

In the midst of the game one of them said: "I wonder what we would do if an angel came down from Heaven to tell us that in ten minutes hence we should all be dead."

One said: "I would kneel down where I am, and say my prayers until the last moment came."

Another said: "I would go immediately to Confession, to obtain pardon for my sins."

A third said: "As for me, I would run to the nearest church, that I might die at the foot of the altar."

It was now the Saint's turn to speak. He smiled on them as he said: "I would just go on with my game, and continue it till the moment of my death."

The others all said to him: "O Father, how could you prepare yourself to die in that way, for it is a most serious thing to die?"

The Saint replied: "I began this game with the intention of pleasing God, and that I might fulfil His Holy Will; therefore I was doing what was most agreeable to Him. In what way could a person die better than in doing God's Holy Will?"

GOD KNOWS MY NAME.

A poor Irish woman went to a priest in Boston some time ago, and asked him to forward to Ireland some little help for those who were suffering from the famine that prevailed there.

"How much can you spare?" asked the priest.

"I have a hundred dollars saved," she said, "and I can spare that sum."

The priest began to reason with her, saying that the gift was too great for her slender means. But all he said could not make her change her mind. "It will do me good to know that I have been able to help a little," she said, "and I shall be able to rest happier when I think of the poor families I have saved from hunger and death."

The priest then took the money she offered him, but as he did so his eyes filled with tears.

" Now, what is your name ?" he asked, " that I may have it published."

" My name ?" she exclaimed in surprise ; " don't mind that, Father. Just send them the help. God knows my name, and that is quite enough for me."

GRACE BEFORE AND AFTER MEALS.

There is one thing above all others which distinguishes the faithful Catholic child from the one who is careless in the service of God, and that is his fidelity to say the grace before and after meals ; it is also a manifestation of his holy Faith before men.

The Catechism teaches us the words we ought to say.

The grace before meals is : " Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen."

The grace after meals is : " We give Thee thanks, Almighty God, for all Thy benefits, Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen."

HE MADE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

A number of gentlemen sat down to dinner at a public table in an hotel in one of our large cities. They were of different positions in life, but all belonged to a superior class, and were well attired. They had just begun to eat, when a young man entered and sat down at the same table with them. He also, like themselves, was of a good position in the world.

Before beginning his meal he made the sign of the

Cross, and said grace devoutly. As he was doing this the others suddenly ceased eating, and their eyes were all fixed upon him. Some were surprised, others smiled contemptuously, and not a few laughed aloud. The young gentleman looked up, and saw immediately that he himself was the cause of this unseemly behaviour.

"Gentlemen," he said, addressing them, "why are you gazing at me in such an offensive manner? What have I done, or what do you see in me, that can cause you so much surprise and amusement?"

A young officer, more insolent than the others, replied: "You would make even the most serious person amused if he only saw you performing the ridiculous gestures we have just now witnessed."

"Oh, you are laughing at me, therefore, because you saw me make the sign of the Cross, and ask the blessing of God before I began to eat. Let me now ask you, Who is worthy of the most honour and respect, the man who is not ashamed to accomplish what he knows to be his duty, even before men who are strangers to him, or the one who through human respect neglects it? I am a Catholic, and I am not ashamed of my religion; on the contrary, I thank God from my inmost heart for the gift of the true Faith He has given me."

These words, spoken with respectful firmness, made a marked impression on the whole company present. The officer who had spoken so insolently hung down his head in confusion, and the rest of the time necessary for dinner would have been spent in painful silence had not the young gentleman turned the conversation to some other subject. He con-

tinued it with such cheerfulness and tact as to show that one who is a good Catholic can also be an agreeable member of society.

Before rising from table he again made the sign of the Cross, and said grace as he had done in the beginning. This time no one spoke; on the contrary, the whole company kept a respectful silence; they that day had learned a lesson which many of them retained during the rest of their lives, to respect those who are not ashamed of outwardly professing the Faith they inwardly believe. *Philothea.*

IX. How to Act in the Time of Temptation.

The Catechism tells us how to act when we find ourselves tempted to sin. "When I find myself tempted to sin," it says, "I should make the sign of the Cross on my heart, and call on God as earnestly as I can, saying: 'Lord, save me, or I perish.'"

ST. ANTONY IN TEMPTATION.

When the great St. Antony left the world to serve God in the desert, and to labour to save his soul, the Devil used to assault him with many temptations. Not only did he tempt him, but he used sometimes to appear to him in various ugly shapes to frighten him.

One day, after tempting him in various ways, and being repulsed every time, he became so enraged that he even assaulted him with blows, and tormented him in a way similar to what he had done to Job in former times.

Before he left him Antony was all covered with wounds and bruises.

Suddenly there appeared in his cell a great brightness, and immediately Satan with his wicked angels disappeared. Then St. Antony knew that Our Lord Himself had come to visit him.

"O my good Jesus," said he lovingly, "where wert Thou, where wert Thou? Why didst Thou not come before now to drive Satan away, and to keep him from hurting me?"

To this loving complaint Our Lord answered: "Antony, I was here beside you, and I saw all your conflict. It was with My permission that you were wounded that I might heal you, that you were afflicted that I might comfort you. Like a good soldier you have fought well. Never be afraid of your enemies, but fight them bravely, for I am always near you to help you."

With these words St. Antony was greatly comforted. Our Lord also healed his wounds, and filled his soul with a sweet peace.

RIBAD: *Lives of the Saints*, *t.* 1, p. 285.

THE STRANGER AT THE GATE.

St. Andrew Corsini was called by the grace of God from a worldly, and even a sinful, life to embrace one of rigorous penance. That he might accomplish this, he asked and obtained permission to enter the Carmelite monastery at Tuscany.

One day, not long after his conversion, while the rest of the religious were at dinner, he was at his appointed place at the gate of the monastery. Someone knocked at it, and, going to see who was there, he saw through the openings in the gate a gentleman magnificently clad, and accompanied by a number

of attendants. "Open quickly, Andrew!" cried out the gentleman, "I am one of your near relatives, and I do not want you to live here any longer among these idle men. Your parents also wish you to come with me, for we have promised you in marriage to a young lady both wealthy and beautiful."

"I cannot open the gate," replied Andrew calmly, "because my Superiors have given me orders to open it to no one without permission. Besides, I do not believe that you are one of my relatives, for I do not remember ever having seen you or heard about you. I here serve these humble brothers for the sake of Jesus Christ, Who became man to serve us, and I know that it cannot be my parents' desire that I should leave this place, because they themselves vowed me to the service of God and of Our Lady; you must, therefore, be either Satan himself, or one of his servants."

The other answered: "Open to me, Andrew, I beg of you, for I have certain things to speak to you about in secret which I do not wish your Superior to know of, and he will not see us here."

Andrew replied: "Even if the Superior did not see or hear us, do you not know that God is everywhere, and knows and sees all things? It is for the love of Him that I stand here and attend to this gate, and He will watch over me and help me." Saying these words, he made the sign of the Cross. Satan—for it was the tempter himself who was there—instantly disappeared, and Andrew gave thanks to God for the victory he had gained. From that time he became daily more and more perfect.

From his Life.

X. How to Finish the Day.

We should finish the day by kneeling down and saying our night prayers. We should observe due modesty in going to bed, occupy ourselves with the thoughts of death, and endeavour to compose ourselves to rest at the foot of the Cross, and give our last thoughts to our crucified Saviour.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MY CHILDHOOD.

A pious religious who had left the world to dedicate himself to God in the religious life once related to us the following recollections of his childhood:

"One of the happiest recollections of my life was the early years of my infancy spent under the roof of my pious parents. During the long winter evenings we used to sit together around the cheerful fire which kept from us all thoughts of the cold without. My aged grandfather used to ask us in turn the questions of the Catechism, and would then explain to us their meaning. No one was exempted from this pious duty. My brothers, who were from eighteen to twenty years old, had to take their turns in answering, as well as the youngest members of the household. When Catechism was ended, we all knelt down and recited together our evening prayers, and before retiring to rest we listened to some pious reading or to the "Lives of the Saints," which each of us had to read in turn. Oh, these were indeed happy days! The remembrance of them is now my chief happiness.

"But this was not only the life led by our own

little household; it was the life of every household in the hamlet. The consequence of this was that there was never heard amongst us any quarrelling or lawsuits; we lived together as members of one family, loving one another and helping one another in our needs. It was indeed an earthly paradise."

Catéch. Populaire, iii.

LEOPOLD, ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA.

Leopold, the pious Archduke of Austria, although occupied frequently far into the night with the affairs of his eminent position, never retired to rest without having previously examined his conscience, said his night prayers, and commended his soul to God.

When sprinkling himself and his bed with holy water, he was accustomed to make use of a prayer similar to that which the Church has appointed to be said in the administration of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction: "May Our Lord, by this holy sprinkling and His most tender mercy, forgive me whatever sins I may have committed this day by thoughts, words, deeds, or omissions."

Then, before falling asleep, he would add the beautiful prayer which is said over those who are in the agonies of death: "Go forth, my soul, from this world in the Name of God the Father Almighty, Who created thee; in the Name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, Who suffered and died for thee; and in the Name of the Holy Ghost, Who sanctified thee. Go forth, O my soul, in the Name of all the Saints of God, and may thy abode be in peace, and may Sion be thy holy dwelling-place."

Vita ej., part I, c. ii.

LX

PERSEVERANCE

I. The Importance of this Subject.

My child, you have now come to the end of this book, which was written for your instruction. In it you have learned what God wants you to believe, and what He wants you to do that you may reach eternal life. You have seen also the means He has so lovingly given you to help you to reach Heaven, and you have taken the firm resolution to make use of them, so that you may one day have the happiness of being with God, Whom you love so well.

You have begun well; but one thing is yet wanting to secure the eternal kingdom for which you were made, and that is the grace of Perseverance.

Perseverance consists in continuing till the very last moment of your life to serve and love God. This is the crowning grace you should without ceasing beg of God to grant you. If you obtain it your happiness in Heaven is secured for all eternity. "He who shall persevere unto the end," says Jesus Christ, "he shall be saved."

THE VISION OF THE HERMIT.

There is a beautiful legend told of a certain holy hermit who had lived a long life in solitude con-

versing with God alone, and his heart continually meditating on heavenly things.

One day he thought he saw Heaven opened, and in the midst of the unspeakable glory of Paradise he saw a magnificent throne placed high up near the throne of God, but it was empty. And while he was wondering what this vision could mean, and for whom this glorious throne had been prepared, an angel came to him, and said : " You are anxious to know why God has granted you this vision, and to learn for whom He has prepared the beautiful throne which you see. Know, then, that the glory you see in Paradise is the reward God gives to all His faithful servants, little and great, and that the throne you see placed so high in Heaven is for one who is still on earth, and who has grown old in virtue and merit before God, whom God is now about to call forth from the world, and whom He will place in it for all eternity."

The hermit, emboldened by the gentleness of the angel, asked him : " And where does that holy one live, for surely he must be great indeed, and his name must be renowned all over the world, since he has merited so magnificent a reward ?"

The angel answered : " Come with me, and I will lead you to the place where that great Saint now dwells."

So, accompanied by the angel, the hermit set out to find the Saint, old in virtue and merit, for whom the beautiful throne was prepared in Paradise.

And as they passed on together they came to a stately convent, the inmates of which were renowned throughout the country for their fervour,

for they were governed by a holy Abbess, who was bent down under the weight of many years and of much labour done for God.

The hermit, knowing this, said to the angel: "Is it for this holy Abbess that the throne in Heaven is prepared?"

The angel answered: "No; she is as yet too young. In the way that the world counts she is eighty years of age, and although she is serving God faithfully, she, in the eyes of God, is only twenty years old. Let us look elsewhere."

They next came to a stately mansion, in which there dwelt a pious and rich nobleman, who divided his time between prayer and works of mercy. His castle was open to the poor and to strangers, and it was his delight to minister to them with his own hands. He was very old—nearly one hundred years—and the hermit thought that this might be the one who was to possess the throne of glory.

But the angel, knowing his thoughts, said: "This man also is too young; in the reckoning of God he is only fifteen years of age."

The next one whom the hermit thought might be the favoured one was a pious widow now advanced in years, the mother of a large family, whom, from their childhood, she had imbued with the fear and love of God. Some of them were serving God in the priesthood, others in convents, and those who were living in the world were models of piety and virtue; and all this was due to the faithful manner in which she had fulfilled the duties of her state of life and the care with which she had brought them up for God.

The angel, in answer to the hermit's question if this were the one, answered : " No, she, too, is too young ; she has been a dutiful mother, it is true, but there was mixed with her good actions too much worldly affection, so that much of the merit of her good works is lost in the eyes of God. She is only eight years old."

The hermit became sad and thoughtful, and wondered who that one could be who had grown old in virtue, since these, whom he considered the most perfect, were so young in the eyes of God.

At length they reached a great city in which there dwelt a woman renowned for her works of piety and mercy. She spent her time in prayer before the altar, or in tending the sick and infirm, in taking care of the orphan, the blind, and the outcast, and in consoling the afflicted and the poor. The hermit, calling to mind the words of Jesus about the reward He would bestow on those who, like this woman, had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and visited the afflicted, thought that she must be the one who was to inherit the heavenly throne.

The angel, knowing what was passing in his mind, again said : " Neither is it for this one that the throne you saw is prepared. It is true she has lived a long time on earth ; in the eyes of God also her life has been long, but she is still too young. Her time, however, will soon come, and the just Judge will soon place her in possession of the reward He has promised ; but she has yet something to do before that hour will come."

Then continuing, he said : " Come, and I will show you the soul for whom God has prepared that

throne of glory." And the angel led him into a humble house in a back street of that same great city. On a poor and lowly bed lay a young girl dying. She was only twenty years of age. The angel said : " This is the soul, grown old in virtue and piety, for whom that throne in Heaven is prepared."

The hermit stood back in astonishment, and wondered what that young woman could have done to make her surpass in virtue so many others who were advanced in age, and whose long lives seemed to have been spent entirely for God. And knowing he had a mind to ask him, the angel said : " The ways of God are not as the ways of men. In the eyes of the world this young woman is but twenty years old ; in the eyes of God she has reached a hundred years. From the first moment that she came to the use of reason until now not one hour of her life has been lost for Heaven ; not only has not an hour been lost, but not an hour has passed by without her meriting double, and even fourfold, the merit of her good works before God, on account of the faith, the love, and the hope in which they were performed. The world saw them not, and heeded them not ; they were too little in its eyes to gain from it even one passing thought ; but the eye of God saw all, and everything she did was pleasing to Him, and now the hour has come for her to receive in Heaven the reward she has merited."

And as the angel spoke, behold the soul of the young woman left her body, and the angels received it into their arms, and they began to sing a canticle such as the angels alone can sing. A dazzling light

filled the humble home and reached up to Heaven, and the hermit, looking upwards, saw Jesus on His throne of judgment stretching out His arms towards her and bidding her welcome to His kingdom; and He saw the angels at His command bear her upwards, and place her on the throne he had seen high up in Paradise. The heavenly host sang a new canticle which resounded throughout the courts of Heaven. Then the hermit said to the angel: "My lord, I beseech thee teach me the way in which I must walk that I, too, one day may merit to reach the joys of Paradise I have seen to-day."

And the angel answered: "Live in this world for God alone, and to accomplish His Holy Will; do all for His honour and glory, in faith, in confidence, and love; and when you have thus accomplished the work God has given you to do, He will, as He has promised, give you also the crown of life."

Christian Legends.

II. Perseverance in the Faith.

God has given you, my child, the gift of the true Faith. It is the greatest of all His gifts. Without it you could not know and love Him here, nor see Him in Heaven hereafter. How earnestly you should daily labour to keep the flame of faith burning brightly within you, and how careful you should be never to expose yourself to the danger of losing it!

THE SHIELD OF FAITH.

St. Ambrose had a sister who, like himself, was leading a very holy life. In one of her letters to

him she wrote that she was often tormented with temptations against faith, and she asked him to tell her how to overcome them.

"My dear sister," he answered, "every morning and every night say with great devotion the Apostles' Creed, and whenever these temptations come, say it again, and I am sure you will easily overcome them." She did as he advised her, and never afterwards found any difficulty in keeping away these thoughts, which had till then given her so much trouble.

Répertoire du Catéchiste.

THE COWARDLY SOLDIERS.

On the way to Nicomedia, where he was to suffer martyrdom, St. Lucian met a band of soldiers who were Christians, and who, when brought before the Judge to answer for their Faith, had in a cowardly manner denied it, through fear of the torments with which they were threatened.

Lucian was grieved when he heard of their cowardice. "You can without fear," he said to them, "go forth and meet death on the battle-field for an earthly King, and now you have turned your backs upon your Heavenly King, and have like cowards and traitors thrown down your arms even before the conflict has begun. When this great King shall call upon you to give Him a strict account of how you have fought on the battle-field in the defence of His kingdom, who will then defend you? Is He not the Master of the world, and does He not hold in His hands the keys of life and death? Oh, how much better it would have been for you to have despised this temporal life, which you may lose at any moment,

and to have considered only that life which is to come, where you would receive an eternal reward, instead of condemning yourselves to the everlasting fire of Hell!"

The soldiers were moved by these words. Many of them afterwards confessed their Faith, and received the crown of martyrdom, and the rest merited by their repentance to die the death of the just.

"I WILL GIVE THEE THE CROWN OF LIFE."

St. Barbara had been enclosed by her father in a high tower to which no one could have access. He was a pagan, and did this because he saw that his daughter reverenced the Christian religion, and he feared lest, during the many occasions on which he was necessarily absent, she might find means of embracing Christianity, which he so intensely hated.

But God, Who is almighty, is not to be restrained in His designs by any human power; and the doctrine of Jesus Christ entered her lonely abode because of the strong desire she had to know God. A certain man whom her father chose to initiate her into the knowledge of human literature was the means God employed to teach her what she so earnestly desired to know. She was instructed in the Faith, and received the Sacrament of Baptism.

Her father, on his return, having been informed that in his absence she had become a Christian, was so filled with anger that he of his own accord went to the Governor, and accused her of having renounced the worship of the gods.

At first the Judge endeavoured to gain her over

to renounce her new religion by words of flattery and deceit; but Barbara was deaf to his appeals. He subjected her to the most terrible torture his cruel mind could conceive to compel her to deny Jesus Christ.

Barbara remained unshaken in the midst of them all. Lifting up her eyes to Heaven, she prayed thus: "O my Divine Lord, Whose eye can reach the very depths of our inmost souls, and Who knowest with what ardent desires I aspire after the possession of Thyself in Heaven, be pleased not to forsake me in my sufferings for Thee, but strengthen me to persevere to the end."

Her prayer was heard, for on the following night she was consoled by a beautiful vision. Our Divine Lord Himself appeared to her, surrounded with celestial brightness, and said to her in a tone full of sweetness and tenderness: "Barbara, persevere courageously, and I will give thee the crown of eternal life."

This apparition was for the youthful maiden the cause of the greatest consolation and encouragement, and gave her renewed fortitude to endure with patience all the tortures to which the cruel Judge condemned her; and when the moment came for her to resign her pure soul into the hands of her beloved Spouse, she blessed her inhuman father, who besought the Judge to permit him to be her executioner. Her head was separated from her body by the sword wielded by the hands of her own unnatural parent, and she went to receive the crown of life her Divine Spouse had promised her.

Lives of the Saints, December 4.

III. Perseverance in the Service of God.

It is not enough for you to possess the Faith, my child, but you must show forth that Faith by the good works it requires you to perform. God has given you the Faith that by it you may please Him, and it is to those only who persevere in the service of God to the end that Heaven, the promised reward, will be given.

Jesus, the Consolation of the Poor.

Jesus knew that the greater part of men, being condemned to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, stand in need of consolation and encouragement. In what better way could He encourage them to submit patiently to these hardships than by labouring like themselves ?

Therefore, from the twelfth till the thirtieth year of His age did He work at the humble yet laborious trade of a carpenter. What workman can now complain, since Jesus for his sake laboured so long ? Does He not say to everyone of these : " Be comforted, My beloved brother, since I, your God, laboured like you. Like you I had to undergo fatigue and toil ; it was for you I suffered all this. Be patient, then ; the reward I have merited for you is more precious than all the treasures in this world ; it is the eternal glory of Heaven. No more tears there, no more sorrow, no more labours ; it is an eternal repose."

O my child, keep Jesus' humble life ever before your mind, and when you grow up and begin to labour, think of Jesus in His home at Nazareth, and

say to Him : " O my dearest Master, I desire to live, to labour, and suffer as Thou didst, and for love of Thee."

THE CHILD WHOM GOD LOVES BEST.

Among the pupils under the holy Abbot Sylvian there was one whom he seemed to love more tenderly than the rest. He was the youngest, and his name was Mark. The other pupils observed, with a little envy, the preference he had for their youngest companion, and they complained of it to the other religious of the monastery.

One day they went to the Abbot, and told him what the pupils had said, and of the envy which had arisen in their hearts against Mark, and they asked him if it were not more prudent to have the same affection for all the boys under his charge.

" It is quite true, my brethren," he said in reply, " that I have a greater love for Mark than for the others, but if you come with me I will show you the reason of it."

So, accompanied by the monks, he went to that part of the house occupied by the boys. Going to the cell of the first one, he said to the boy who was within : " Arsenius, my child, come with me ; there is something I want you to do."

" Yes, Father," he replied, " I will be ready in a few moments." The Abbot went to the other cells, and asked each of the pupils to come to him, as he had something for him to do, and he received a similar answer.

But when he went to the cell where Mark was, no sooner had he spoken than the child ran to his feet,

saying : " Here I am, my Father ; what do you want of me ?"

The Abbot turned towards the religious, and said : " Brethren, you see now why I love Mark more than the others ; it is on account of his ready obedience. From the time he entered this house he has never once disobeyed me."

So the child whom God loves best is the one who has never broken His commandments.

" I BELONG TO NO ONE."

St. Hildebert, Bishop of Meaux, was one day walking along the road thinking on the great love of Jesus Christ for poor sinners.

Coming along the same road in an opposite direction was a young man dressed in the height of fashion, and walking with a proud and haughty air.

The Bishop knew him to be one of his flock who was a " man of the world "—one who thought little of God or of the life to come.

He had often desired to see him change his life, and resolved now to try if he could bring him to think of the " one thing necessary." So when he came up to him, he said :

" My young man, to whom do you belong ?"

The man, casting on the Bishop a look of great contempt, answered : " I am my own master ; I belong to no one."

The Bishop, pointing to a large Crucifix which stood by the wayside, said to him : " My son, do not speak in that way. Do you not know that you belong, soul and body, to Jesus Christ ? that He died on the Cross to save you from Hell ? So you are *not*

your own master, and you *do* belong to someone else. You are the property of Jesus Christ, bought not with gold nor silver, but with His own most precious blood."

The young man was evidently moved, and the Bishop, seeing it, went on to exhort him to change his life, and for the time to come to live for God alone.

He promised to do so. Taking the Bishop by the hand, he asked his forgiveness, and recommended himself to his prayers.

As he continued on his way he was heard to say to himself these words : " Yes, I belong to Jesus Christ ; I am *His* property, and I desire to be so in time and, in eternity."

Pensez y bien.

You, too, my child, are the property of Jesus Christ, for He redeemed you also. Be sure, then, to keep this in mind, and you will always please Him.

" GOD KNOWS BEST : MAY HIS HOLY WILL BE DONE."

There was a bright fire burning in the grate, which cast its light upon the brightly-polished furniture of a tidily-kept room of a young labourer. Everywhere was to be seen that cleanliness and simplicity which delight the eye.

Near the window on the outside of the dwelling stood a poor man looking at the comfort which he could see was the portion of those within. He was an old man, and a wanderer, begging his bread from door to door ; his wasted appearance told plainly of many hardships endured, and his gentle eye bespoke that virtue and resignation which are the only conso-

lation of those who in their poverty are resigned to God's Will.

His eyes were fixed upon the young wife and mother seated near the comfortable hearth. Neatly attired and tidy, like all her surroundings, it was evident that she was the mistress of that humble dwelling ; she evidently could not bear to behold any want of order in herself, nor in anything under her charge.

When one perceives this elegant simplicity, the outward sign of inward purity of heart, there naturally arises in his mind the thought that such an abode must be one of unalloyed happiness and peace. Yet it was far from being so in this house. The young woman sat before her spinning-wheel, yet it did not move, and her motionless hands held the threads she did not twist. These hands, generally so busy, were now idle, and that woman always so industrious sat in silence, her head buried in her hands, and tears flowing down copiously from her eyes between her fingers.

" This good woman is not happy," said the stranger to himself as he gazed on her unperceived. " I will try to approach her, and learn, if I may, what makes her so sorrowful, that I may be able to impart to her some little consolation."

Thinking thus, he knocked on the glass of the window. The young woman, suddenly aroused from her sorrowful thoughts, rose up and opened the door to admit him, and asked him to enter.

" Be seated on that chair," she said kindly to the old man ; " warm your limbs at the fire, for the weather is cold and dreary ; lay aside your hat and

staff, and rest yourself for a while ; I will presently give you a plateful of warm soup, which I had prepared for my husband, but which he could not touch to-day. You seem to be hungry as well as cold."

While she was preparing the welcome refreshment, she said to him : " Have you travelled a great distance to-day, my good old man, for you seem to me to be very tired and weak."

" Oh yes," he answered, " it is true that I have travelled a great distance to-day, and that I am weak and tired. When one has reached his eightieth year, as I have, it is indeed very wearisome to have to contend with the cold and the heat, with hunger and storms, weariness and infirmities. Yes, yes, my good woman, I am indeed very desolate, and weary unto death. I hope that soon, if so it be the Will of God, death will come and deliver me."

" Is not that a strange fancy ?" she interposed. " Is it not singular that you should desire to die, when so many who are dying wish to live ? Oh, since it is so, would to God that you had been in the place of our little Margaret, whom we have just laid in her grave in the cemetery yonder ! Alas ! that dear little child, whom we all loved so tenderly, was taken from us ; she had been granted by God to us for four years only."

" This, therefore, is the reason why you look so sorrowful," the old man said, in a tone of sympathy. " It is indeed sad to see a little child laid in its grave ; but since it was the Will of God to take her away from you, is she not better in His hands ? As for myself, instead of being filled with sorrow when I hear of the death of one who has lived piously and died in the

grace of God, I am filled with great joy, because his sorrows and dangers are all past and gone, and he is safe with God.

" For the greater part of mankind, life is a very heavy burden to carry. If your little child had lived, who knows to how many sufferings and dangers, both to soul and body, she would have been exposed during the course of her existence on earth ? Let me relate to you an incident that came under my own notice during my many wanderings.

" Many, many years ago I happened to enter the house of a poor labourer at the very time his sixth child was born. All was desolation and misery in that house. Five little children were standing around their father clamouring for bread, and he had none to give them. The newly-born child lay beside his mother on a sack of straw, so emaciated that one would have thought that it could scarcely live. The mother, taking it up in her arms, pressed it to her breast, saying : ' O Lord, my God, it will cost me many tears to bring up the children Thou hast given me.' Ah, it was indeed a sight sad enough to make one tremble.

" But listen to what I have to say still. About five years afterwards I returned to that same place. I recalled to mind the poor labourer and his family whom I had seen when I was last there. I visited the house again. The woman was kneeling at the side of a wretched little bed praying ; on the bed lay a little child in the agonies of death : it was her youngest boy. She had brought him into this world in sorrow, he had lived till now in misery, but still she could not resign herself to lose him. She prayed

aloud, with tears flowing from her eyes and her hands raised heavenwards, that he might still be spared to her. God heard her prayer, and the boy recovered.

"Many years afterwards I was again in the same village. As I was passing down the street towards the house where I formerly found these poor people, I was startled by the cry, 'Stop, thief! stop, thief!' and a crowd of people hurried past me to arrest him. I entered the house. There sat the man, the father of the little family of days long past; he was pale as death. His glossy black hair had now become white as the driven snow, and he was trembling at that moment from head to foot. His wife sat beside him, with her arms around him, sobbing and weeping. 'Ah, would to God,' she exclaimed, 'that he had been taken away when in his infancy I prayed that God might spare him; he would now assuredly be an angel of Heaven.' Poor, afflicted parents! The robber was their sixth child, the youngest one."

The old man ceased to speak; the bereaved mother, too, was silent. Soon she rose up, and laid the hot soup before him. When he had partaken of it, and said his prayer of thanksgiving, he arose to continue his journey. "I thank you," said he to the good woman, while pressing her hand in gratitude; "the food you have given me has warmed and strengthened me. May God reward you for your kindness to me."

"It is I rather who should thank you, good old man," replied the now consoled mother, as she pressed his hand to her lips; "you also have strengthened me, but it is with the celestial food of resignation, and you have warmed my desolate

heart by your kind words. Now I can see how well it is both for little Margaret and myself that God has taken her from me. It is His Blessed Will, and He knows best. I sincerely thank you for your beautiful narrative; it has given me great consolation in my sorrow. God has already rewarded me for any little kindness I may have shown you."

TH. VON GUMPERT.

THE YOUNG NOVICE.

Our Blessed Lord tells us in the Gospel that if we desire to become perfect we must follow Him by carrying our Cross as He did—that is, by bearing patiently the trials and sufferings of this short life.

There was once a young man who took the firm resolution of living a perfect life on earth, that he might secure for himself a crown of glory in Heaven.

For this purpose he went to a monastery, where he thought he would be better able to live a perfect life than in the midst of a world full of dangers and temptations.

At first, being very fervent, everything seemed easy to him, and he found the greatest delight in the perfect accomplishment of his Rule. But as time went on, and the novelty of his position began to wear away, he no longer felt that happiness and joy which he felt at the beginning. Everything seemed weary and irksome to him, and he fell first into lukewarmness, and then into a state of great discontent. Among other things he took a great dislike to the clothing which the novices had to wear, because it was made of very rough material.

One night as he lay down to rest in this discon-

tented mood he had a vision. He thought he saw Our Divine Saviour Jesus Christ carrying a very heavy cross on His shoulders, and that He was trying to go up a very steep and narrow ladder, which caused Him greater and greater difficulty. The novice, seeing this, and touched with compassion, ran forward to Our Lord, and said to Him : " O Lord, I will help You to carry that cross." But Our Lord, turning towards him, looked at him with great indignation, and said : " You help Me ! How could you help Me to carry My cross, which is so heavy, when you are not able to carry for love of Me the poor and rough dress of your Order, which is so very light in comparison ?"

At once the vision disappeared, and the novice awoke. He was confused when he began to think of the reproach he had received, and resolved at once to change his life, and to suffer all with love and patience.

RODRIGUEZ : *Christian Perfection.*

" KEEP NEAR TO GOD."

One of the ancient Fathers of the desert gave the following advice to a young monk who asked him how he could most easily persevere and gain the victory over the three great enemies of his soul : " My child, keep near to God ; as no one dare go forward to hurt a person while he is at the side of the Emperor, so neither can Satan do any injury to you if you keep close to God. The Apostle says : ' Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.' It is only because people do not think of God, or keep themselves in His holy presence, that so many are overcome, and lose their souls."

IV. Perseverance in Bearing our Cross.

The way to Heaven, my child, is full of dangers, and many people who when young were very pious and fervent never reached it because they did not persevere. The reason why they did not persevere was because they became weary and tired in the path of virtue, and laid down the Cross Our Lord had given them to carry. They neglected to pray to Him to help them, or did not pray as they ought to have done, and hence they failed.

ST. MARTINA'S MARTYRDOM.

St. Martina was young and beautiful, as well as rich and noble. She was a Christian, and lived in the terrible times of persecution during the first ages of the Church.

When the Judge heard that she was a Christian, he ordered her to be brought before him. Touched by her youth and beauty, he at first spoke kindly to her.

"My daughter," he said, "you are as yet very young, and perhaps you do not know the law, which forbids anyone to profess the Christian religion."

"Yes," replied Martina, "I know the law, for I heard it proclaimed, and I also know the punishment that awaits me if I disobey the law; but I will never renounce my Faith: I must obey God rather than man."

"Recall these words," cried out the Judge in great anger, "or prison and death await you."

"God's Holy Will be done," was her only answer.

She then went joyfully to prison, her face beaming

with hope, and her eyes raised up to Heaven. She knew well that her sufferings would soon be over, and that she would be eternally with God in her own sweet home above.

The Judge often sent for Martina to see if he could make her change her mind, but he always found her as firm as a rock.

At length he told her to prepare for the torture. The cruel executioners began by tearing off the nails one by one from her tender fingers. Not a tear did she shed, not a moan did she utter, but she kept her eyes constantly fixed on Heaven.

The Judge now became furious, and ordered the executioners to torment her still more cruelly. They made deep gashes in her virginal body, and into the gaping, bleeding wounds they poured boiling oil. What a terrible torment! But Martina always kept her eyes fixed on Heaven, and remained calm and immovable.

At length the Judge commanded her to be beheaded, and her pure soul ascended into Heaven, surrounded by choirs of angels.

My child, you may never be called to suffer what St. Martina suffered, but you will have many crosses and trials to endure before you die. Keep your eyes always on Heaven as she did, and you will obtain from that same God Who strengthened her, grace to be faithful to the end as she was.

THE CHILD JESUS AMONG THE THORNS.

There was once a pious nun who desired very much to see Jesus, Whom she tenderly loved. It was her greatest delight to think of Him as a little

child in the arms of His Holy Mother, and often did she say to Him this prayer :

" O my dear Jesus, how beautiful, how lovely You must have been, as You lay on the bosom of Your Blessed Mother ! Oh, how happy would I be if I could only see You for a few moments, and take You into my arms as Mary did."

Jesus heard her prayer, and granted it.

One day as she was kneeling piously in the presence of God, Jesus appeared to her under the form of a little child. He was sitting in a thorny bush, and the branches full of sharp thorns surrounded Him on every side.

The nun was full of rapture at this sight, and ran with joy to the place where Jesus lay.

But how was she to reach Him ? She began to remove the branches one by one ; but as they were full of thorns, she was wounded by them, and her hands were soon covered with blood. Still she did not stop. She was determined to reach the Holy Child, no matter how much she would have to suffer.

At length, after enduring much pain and receiving many wounds from the thorns, she succeeded in removing all the branches, and joyfully took the Child into her arms, and pressed Him to her heart.

Jesus looked on her affectionately, as much as to say : " I am pleased, My child, with the efforts you have made to reach Me, and I will fill your heart with joy."

Catéchisme Pratique.

You also, my child, will be rewarded in Heaven with the sight of Jesus for ever, if you suffer patiently in this world. You may have many crosses to bear,

but think that each one of them borne patiently brings you nearer to Jesus, and you will find encouragement to persevere.

THE PRAYER OF THE SWEDISH OFFICER.

A young Swedish officer had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the Russians, and became their prisoner.

Although possessing a splendid fortune in his own country, he was compelled, during the time of his captivity, to live in the direst want, because it was impossible for any money to reach him which his friends might desire to send him.

When at times he was permitted to leave his dungeon for a little while, he would wander in the neighbouring forest, a prey to anguish, and mourning his sad fate; at the same time, being a fervent Christian, he would take the opportunity of pouring forth his whole heart in the presence of God His Almighty Father, a Father so full of mercy and love.

It happened that a certain countryman, a Moor belonging to that place, was watching from a distance to see how this young man, evidently plunged in the deepest affliction, would conduct himself. He saw him one day fall upon his knees, raise up his hands to Heaven, and pray with great earnestness. The officer had knelt down in the presence of God to beseech Him to free him from his cruel slavery if it were His Holy Will.

As he prayed there arose within him a feeling of confidence that his prayer would be granted. Full of courage to continue to bear patiently whatever afflictions God might desire yet to send him, but at

the same time marvellously consoled with the hope within him, he returned towards his prison. On the way the Tartar approached him, and asked him who he was. The officer recounted to him the story of his life.

" But how did it take place," asked the countryman, " that you, who a short time ago appeared to be so sad, are now so joyful? Has the God you worship given you anything that could so suddenly work such a change?"

" I have not yet received anything from my God, but He has clearly made known to me that He has heard my prayer. Now, although I have not as yet obtained my request, I am perfectly certain that in His own good time He will grant it to me. For this God of Heaven and earth, Who is the only true God, has a Son Who is called Jesus Christ, for Whose sake, and on account of the love He bears Him, He shows Himself attentive to the prayers addressed to Him by His creatures on earth. Whosoever, therefore, with his whole heart believes in this Son of God, and prays in His Name to His Father in Heaven, will assuredly obtain what he asks for if he prays with confidence."

Not long afterwards the officer received a considerable sum of money sent by his friends, which unexpectedly reached him. The Tartar came to hear of this, and being also very poor, he thus spoke to himself: " Since there exists a God Who has created us all, why may He not aid me also?" Then, with great simplicity, he fell upon his knees as he had seen the officer do, and said this prayer: " Great God, Thou Who hast created Heaven and earth, I

have been told that Thou hast a Son, and that for His sake, and on account of Thy love for Him, Thou dost show Thyself favourable to all mankind, and dost hear all those who call upon Thee. Therefore I beseech Thee, in the Name of Thy Son Jesus Christ, to come to my assistance also, and send me something to help me in my poverty."

God was pleased to hear the humble yet confident prayer of this simple countryman, and from that hour his affairs began to prosper. He, in the fullness of his heart, went to the officer, and told him what God had done for him because he had prayed to Him. "I am indeed very happy," he said, "to have learned something about this true God. Henceforth I also wish to adore Him, and offer up to Him my homage, through the hands of His beloved Son."

The pious officer gave him all the instruction he was able concerning God and His Church. The Tartar became in the end a devout Christian, and every day of his life was more and more convinced that God always listens to the prayers of those who call upon Him with confidence in the Name of His Divine Son. *Lebensbilder*, Augsbourg, 1841.

BLESSED BERNARD AT EIGHTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE.

When Blessed Bernard of Fabriano was eighty-four years of age, one of the younger brothers said to him: "How happy you must now be, Brother Bernard! for the time of temptation must now be over for you, bent down as you are by the weight of years, and fortified by a life of penance."

The holy man answered: "You are mistaken, my

brother, for I have no confidence in my own strength. My body may be enfeebled with old age, but so long as it is the dwelling-place of my soul, I may still fall into sin. I feel that I am still a wayfarer in this mortal life, for frequently I have to bear the assaults of temptation; it is only when death comes and frees the soul from the body that the time of temptation shall come to an end."

Fleurs Choisies: St. Francis, p. 29.

WHY HE DID NOT COMPLAIN.

One of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus was preaching a mission in a large town. God had given him the gift of touching the hearts of his hearers, and many who came to hear his sermons through curiosity returned home sorry for their sins, with the resolution of living more piously for the future.

One day a young man went to hear him. He had from his boyhood lived a worldly and sinful life. But as the words of the preacher fell on his ears the grace of God spoke to his heart, and he resolved to change his life and become a Saint.

To accomplish this with greater security, he went to a monastery, where for the rest of his life he wept for the sins of his youth, and lived in great piety.

When he had been a few years there, it happened that the same Father who had preached the mission at which he had been converted visited the monastery. Hearing that the man was there, he asked the Superior permission to speak to him. His request was at once granted.

After the first kindly greetings were over, the

priest said to him: "I am sure you must be very happy here, so free from all dangers, and bearing the sweet yoke of Our dear Lord."

"It is true, my dear Father," he replied, "that I am happy here, but I have many trials and many crosses to carry. I feel it as difficult now to submit to the silence, fasting, and watching which our Rule enjoins as I did on the first day I came here. But when I remember that by bearing patiently these trials I am satisfying for my past sins, and gaining by God's grace merit for Heaven, instead of complaining, I thank God every day for His goodness to me. It is indeed difficult for human nature to support all this, but the thought of Heaven gives me courage, and I say to myself: 'Go on, my soul; fight bravely; if you hope to reach Heaven, you must carry your Cross;' and in this way what is so difficult in itself becomes easy to me."

Catéchisme de Persévérance.

V. Perseverance in Devotion to Our Lady.

Amongst the many pious works that have been recommended to you in this book for your advancement in piety and for your perseverance there was no one more frequently placed before you, after the love of Jesus Christ, than devotion to His Most Holy Mother, the ever Blessed Virgin. Those who honour her, and are truly devout to her, can certainly look forward with confidence to the happiness of Heaven hereafter; for Mary, the Mother of God, is our Mother also, and is of all mothers the most loving. And who is there who would fear to be condemned

by the Judge, Who is also her Son, if he during life has lovingly served the Mother of that same Son and Judge ?

"O MY QUEEN AND MY MOTHER !"

In a certain house where boys were received for their education there was one whose name was Paul, and who at the time we write was just sixteen years old.

Paul was remarkable amongst all the other boys for his gentleness, his piety, and his good conduct ; everyone loved him. To look at him one would have thought that he had never committed any sin.

But such was not the case. There had been a time when that boy, now so gentle, so mild, and good, had been a slave to sin. The following is the story of his life and conversion ; it was himself who told it to one of his masters :

" I was once a good boy ; so long as I was near my good mother, and until I was about eleven years old, I did not know what mortal sin was.

" At that time it happened that one day when I was in the fields playing with a companion who was a little older than myself, he taught me to do what was a mortal sin. From that moment I became most unhappy : I could find no peace night nor day, because I knew that if I died in that state I should be sent to Hell for all eternity.

" What made my state more awful still was this, that I also went and made two other innocent companions commit a grievous sin. When I came into this house, I was quite as bad. I committed sin after sin ; and I gave up all hope of ever becoming

good again. I was perfectly miserable, and when I saw others who were so pious and so good, I wondered if it were possible that I could ever be like them. The Devil whispered to me : ' No, no, you can never be like them.' However, I always preserved a pleasant face, and people used to think I was a very good boy.

" Some of my companions came and asked me to become a member of one of the sodalities established in the house under the protection of Our Blessed Lady. I joined it just for appearance' sake, and not to be thought bad or careless.

" It was then for the first time I heard of that little prayer, ' O my Queen and my Mother, protect me, help me, for I am thine,' and read the examples of Mary's protection given to those who said it devoutly. I began to say it every day, and it was not long before I went to my Confession. I made a good Confession ; and oh, how happy I felt then ! I said my little prayer every day, and I felt it so easy to keep good.

" But I began to think of the terrible things I did in making the two children commit sin, so I am going to become a brother of that religious community which has specially for its object the pious education of the young, that I may be the means of saving more souls than I have caused to be lost.

" Temptations often come back to me ; but when they come I immediately remember the little aspiration, ' O my Queen and my Mother.' I at once say it, and then the temptation soon goes away."

Devotion à Marie.

THE "HAIL MARY" ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

Father Weninger relates that he once met a French officer who was a Protestant, but who had married a lady who was a Catholic. During his conversation with him the officer suddenly said: "What I like most about Catholics is that they honour Mary with so much veneration, esteem, and devotion. I myself am a Protestant," he added, "but I am delighted to hear my wife and my children say so often: 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death.' Let me tell you what once happened to me in Paris:

"During the great Revolution of 1848, General Bignau rode up to my house in great haste, and said, 'Come, my friend, hasten to the barricades!' I instantly made my will, embraced my wife and children, mounted my horse, and galloped forward to oppose the rebels. It was a terrible moment. I have been in many battles, but the most terrible of them can bear no comparison to that street fight. When the balls of the insurgents were whistling past me like hail in a tempest, I thought of the prayers that were being said for me at that moment by my dear wife and little ones, and in the roar and the din of the conflict I also said within my heart: 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Mary, pray for me!' I did not receive even the slightest wound."

Ave Maria, xiii. 497.

So likewise, my child, if during the many battles of life in which you must be engaged you have recourse to your Heavenly Mother Mary, she will

procure for you from her Divine Son the grace—that grace the greatest of all others—the grace of Final Perseverance.

VI. The Crown of Perseverance: the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints." Who are these Saints of whom the Holy Ghost speaks to us in these words? They are all the children of God who have received from Jesus Christ the sentence of the elect, not only the innocent who have never sinned, but also those who had committed sin, but had repented of them and done penance for them.

O my child, may God one day number you also among the Saints!

"My soul, thy home is above, not here!"

St. Macarius of Alexandria lived more in Heaven than on earth during the days of his exile. In Heaven were all his thoughts; on Heaven were all his desires fixed.

Whenever he was through necessity occupied with any worldly things, he would say to himself: "Now, O my soul, pay attention; thy home is above, not here. See, then, that thou dost not attach thyself to these earthly things. There above is thy true country; here on earth thou art only a stranger. It is in Heaven where thou shalt possess that light which never fades; it is there where thou shalt find truth and repose and true life which never ends."

Silb. Hausb., S. 488.

THEODORIC CANISIUS.

When Father Theodoric Canisius was informed of the death of his brother Peter, for whom he had always had the most sincere affection, he was struck with an attack of apoplexy which suddenly deprived him of his memory and his speech. The only words he could remember and pronounce were the holy Names of Jesus and Mary.

During the five years he lay motionless on his bed the only action he could of himself perform was to make the sign of the Cross, and this he could do without difficulty.

When the end of his life drew near, he received the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which for a moment seemed to bring back his power of uttering one more word: it was this, "In Heaven! in Heaven!"

He could say no more, and with a heart full of the love of God, he resigned his soul into His hands to enter the joys of Heaven, for which alone he sighed.

Silb. Hausb., S. 475.

"I AM TOO WEAK TO BEAR SUCH HAPPINESS."

St. Ephrem, when he meditated on the happiness of Heaven, was so inundated with delight that he feared he might die through being unable to bear it.

"Stop, O Lord! stop for a little while! Cease to pour out on me Thy heavenly favours in so great an abundance, because I am too weak to bear such overwhelming happiness!" *Surius*, February 1.

"LORD, IT IS GOOD FOR US TO BE HERE."

St. Augustine, meditating on these words of St. Peter to Our Divine Lord on Mount Tabor, "Lord, it is good for us to be here," said: "St. Peter had seen only a little glimpse of the glory of Heaven, yet he was so much enraptured on beholding it that all the glory of this world seemed to him at that moment to have faded away."

How great, therefore, must be the delight of the Saints in Heaven who enjoy to its full extent the felicity which God has bestowed on them in the Kingdom of His glory!

"THE ANGELS AND THE SAINTS AWAIT YOU."

Not only did St. Bonaventure himself sigh ardently after the joys of Heaven, but he burned with the desire of instilling into the heart of everyone he met the same aspiration.

Hence he was often heard to say: "God Himself and His angels, and all the inhabitants of the Heavenly Jerusalem are impatiently awaiting the happy hour when we shall go and join them there and share in their felicity."

And should we not also, my child, with a similar desire pray that the day may soon come when we also may be called to join them? *Stemp. Kran.*

"IN WHAT DOES ETERNAL LIFE CONSIST?"

St. Thomas of Aquin's sister said to him one day: "In what does eternal life consist?"

"My dear sister," he replied, "you will not know

what everlasting life really is until you have gained Heaven and dwell in it. It is something so consoling, so delicious, that the human intellect can never comprehend nor human lips ever express in the smallest degree what that happiness is."

Lohn. Bibl., i. 207.

DEATH OF ST. AMBROSE.

When St. Ambrose was seized with the illness in which he died, the Count Stilicon no sooner saw the danger than he assembled together the friends of the Saint, and asked them to approach him, and to request him to pray to God for a prolongation of his life, for he saw that his death would be a public calamity.

But the Saint answered them: "I do not desire to live, and I do not fear to die. My life and my death are in the hands of God; let that good Master ordain with regard to me whatever is most pleasing to Him."

On the day of his death his lips continued to move in prayer, although his words could not be heard until the last moment came; then, stretching out his hands in the form of a cross, he fell asleep in the Lord shortly after having received Him in Holy Viaticum.

Ber. Berc., tome 4.

"AMEN. COME, O MY LORD JESUS."

"Amen, amen, amen. Come, O my Lord Jesus." This was the constant prayer of an old man of eighty years as he lay on his death-bed, waiting for his Heavenly Father to call him to His eternal King-

dom. And as he repeated these words he would raise up his emaciated hands towards Heaven, and gaze upwards with a smile upon his placid countenance.

His pious daughter, who watched by his side, asked him why he always said that word "Amen."

"O my child," he answered "if you only knew the deep meaning that word has for a Christian who tries to fear God, you would not ask me such a question. All the promises which Jesus Christ has made us are contained in these little words 'Yes' and 'Amen,' for He accomplishes each one of them to the very letter. It is for this reason, therefore, that you hear me say so often the word 'Amen.' Could anyone pronounce a word so expressive or more beautiful or more consoling. When I look back on the many years I have lived on earth, I see that God has done all things well, and that He has accomplished in me all that He promised He would do; then I say, again and again, 'Amen.' And now I say for the last time on earth, 'Amen, amen, amen. Come, O my Lord Jesus.'"

Saying these words with edifying devotion, he entered into the sleep of the just, lying peacefully in the arms of his sorrowing but happy daughter. She closed his eyes with tenderness, and cried out in holy transport, "May I die as my beloved father has died!"

My dear child, this also should be your prayer, not only for yourself, but also for those who are dear to you. I ask of you the same favour for

myself, who have culled for you in this book so many beautiful examples for your instruction. Amen.

Praised and exalted be Jesus, Who has loved us so much! Praised also and glorified for all eternity be His sweet Mother Mary, who has loved us, her unworthy children, with so much affection!

THE END

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